

OFFICIAL PROGRAM

Wild  *12*

12TH WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS

Rapid City, SD August 25-31, 2024



WILD 

“Tawachin gluwanjila
po hechel tokata kiya
wicho ichagin ktelo.”

“Let us put our minds together and see
what life we can make for our children.”

Tâthánka íyotake, *Chief Sitting Bull*



12TH WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS

August 25-31, 2024

*He Sápa, the sacred territory of the Oceti Sakowin
Rapid City, South Dakota*

Welcome to WILD12, the 12th World Wilderness Congress

Dear WILD12 Delegates,

This Congress was convened at the invitation of Philimon Two Eagle. In October 2022, he spoke on behalf of the Oceti Sakowin and asked WILD to “bring the world to the Black Hills so that they can listen to the Lakota speak” about the interconnected burdens of environmental degradation and colonialism.

Philimon’s invitation also presented WILD and the global wilderness community with a unique opportunity to hold a sector-wide, cross-cultural, formal dialogue about the term “wilderness:” what it means to conservation and Indigenous Peoples, as well as an objective assessment of its yields, both harmful and beneficial. We embraced this challenge, consulting with numerous Indigenous Peoples who met in working groups and as appointed advisors, to better understand their approach to what conservation calls “wilderness.” What we learned is their terms encompass a far greater swath of reality and the cosmos than what wilderness, at least as it has been defined by governmental bodies, is permitted to be. Terms like Maka Sitomniya (Lakota), Ubuntu (Zulu), and Whanaungatanga (Māori) possess meanings that not only transcend the physical world, but also stretch across time itself.

Indigenous Peoples fold into a single holistic term the interconnectedness of the unbroken living spirit - past, present, and future - suggesting an alternative to the modern notion that history is a mere succession of events. In this worldview, we as individuals and a species tread upon a landscape shaped by ancient relationships and unbound by the moment. The land itself harbors the spirits of ancestors and the promise of descendants. Subsequently, our actions reverberate across continents, ages, and dimensions. Respect in all dealings, with both the animate and inanimate, is the underpinning of Indigenous lifeways, and for good reason. We operate in an ecology of the eternal.

When people of European descent speak of wilderness as something exotic and remote, it undermines the Indigenous worldview that the land is the foundation of individual and communal identity, the land is the source of knowledge and sustenance, and the land is home.

Philimon Two Eagle is the Executive Director of the Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council, and a direct descendant of Sitting Bull, one of the Oceti Sakowin chiefs who signed the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty with the United States Government. This treaty granted the Lakota Nation sovereignty in perpetuity over the land upon which we gather in August 2024, and which, though still unceded, is no longer governed by Lakota leadership. As we come together to find common ground on ways to protect the sovereignty of Earth's countless landscapes, and the animal and plant nations inhabiting these places, we also ask that our delegates open their hearts and minds to the inherent sovereignty of the human stewards who have tended to these lands for time immemorial. What values and institutions do they carry within them that, if they were empowered to lead once again, could help restore the land to what some refer to as "wilderness" and others call "the way the Creator intended it to be"?

In warmth and gratitude, we welcome you to WILD12, the 12th World Wilderness Congress, in He Sápa, the Black Hills, and wish upon all a productive and respectful time during this historic gathering. May we bring honor to the land, and to our ancestors and descendants, for their spirits will surely be present with us during this event.

Sincerely,

Philimon Two Eagle

Executive Director

Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council

Amy Lewis

Chief Executive Officer

WILD.org

Table of Contents



A Cultural Guide to Respectful Behavior on Sacred Lakota Territory

- **Wolakota Lifeways**
- **Tribal Data Sovereignty**

Schedule

- **How to download the WILD12 app**
- **Venue Layout**
- **Opening Ceremony (August 25)**
- **Global Gathering (Plenary, August 26 & 27)**
- **Knowledge, Wisdom, and Ways of Knowing (Concurrent Sessions, August 29 & 30)**
- **Film Festival (August 29 & 30)**
- **Additional Events**

Acknowledgments

- **Sponsors**
- **Executive Committee**
- **Co-Organizers**
- **Knowledge, Wisdom, & Ways of Knowing Committee**
- **Advisors & Supporters**
- **In Memory**

Stay in Touch

Resolutions

What are Resolutions and Why Do They Matter?

Contact Session Schedule:

- **He Sapa Resolution 1: On Sovereignty and Wilderness:**

Deepening the Wilderness Concept Through Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom

Declaration 1: On Sovereignty and Wilderness:

Deepening the Wilderness Concept Through Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom

- **Resolution 2: Through the Eyes of Buffalo:**

A Strategic Platform to Restore All Natural World Relationships

Declaration 2: Through the Eyes of Buffalo:

A Strategic Platform to Restore All Natural World Relationships

- **Resolution 3: Advancing the Rights of Antarctica**
- **Resolution 4: Mainstreaming Mentorship of Young Conservationists**
- **Resolution 5: Guardianship of Nature**
- **Resolution 6: Ratify the High Seas Treaty**
- **Resolution 7: Making Space to Protect White Animals, Messengers of Peace**
- **Resolution 8: Empowering Ecological Outcomes by Honoring Treaties**





A Cultural Guide
to Respectful Behavior on
Sacred Lakota Territory

Wolakota Code



Victor Douville

Professor of Lakota Studies, Sinte Gleska University

The premise of the Lakota society is based on respect or Waohola. Respect is demonstrated when one observes and maintains integrity at all times. Respectful people avoid excessive and inappropriate talking, and they exhibit reservedness and warmth in their interaction with all people.

Lakota traditional ways inform us that the following are good practices if one seeks to embody respect:

- Hold all people (especially the Elders) in high esteem: honor them, venerate them, and praise them for their probity (wisdom and integrity).
- When ideas and concepts are expressed in meetings, honor them and build on them if they seem good, especially if they came from Elders or learned people.
- Never insist your ideas are better or argue this point.
- Never speak negatively about people in public because this tends to hurt people. When you hurt people it affects their heart. The heart is a sensitive organ and negative elements tend to build within, elements that eventually poison the mind. Decisions should be made from the mind and the heart.
- Do not walk between people who are speaking in public and the audience, or between people who are talking to each other. Do not interfere with people talking or people who have the floor. Non-interference is a virtue.
- Steer clear of confrontation as much as possible. There are ways of settling differences. Use diplomacy. If people are persistent, walk away. This is especially true when others know that the person causing the confrontation is wrong.

- Do not get up and walk out when someone is talking, except in an emergency. Apologize if it is appropriate to do so.
- Allow all speakers to speak their mind without interrupting them. Listen to people or pay attention to them as a courtesy.
- Do not spread rumors. Always try to present facts and truths. Rumors will eventually become well known to people and will be taken care of in time.
- Traditional values should always be upheld because the youth look up to the older generations as models.
- Never correct, challenge or yell at an Elder in public. To do so is a sign of disrespect.
- Always treat the youth or younger generation as one of your own relatives and with respect because they look up to you and emulate what you teach.
- When in the company of Elders, never speak out of turn, unless you are asked something.
- Never point at someone. To do so is a sign of disrespect. Remember the story of the two who pointed at the stars.
- Never threaten anyone with a pipe or ceremony. To do so will bring hurt to you and your family. Never use the pipe in public if there is any negativity or potential negativity.
- As a leader, you are a spokesperson for the people and you should always trust in the people to help you make important decisions.
- Respect your leaders because they deserve the respect they have earned.
- Leaders should always look for a compromise between two irreconcilable forces. Never take sides because a leader should be able to mediate in order to make the best decision for the people.
- Have compassion for people who experience hurt.

Respect is a significant component of Wolakota, the code of compassion that guides Lakota society. Respect is the essential unifying force that helps the people to be in harmony and at peace with each other. Without Wolakota, the results would be catastrophic and would lead our society to decadence. This is why the leaders, especially the elders of the past, conceived of Wolakota and thus ensured that the Lakota way of life would prevail. Today, as has happened in the past when our society faced collapse, the Lakota way of life is facing a similar meltdown because we are moving away from the traditional respect of Wolakota. Our people must go back to the center of our traditional ways by reinstating appropriate values of Woahola and Wolakota.

Hecel oyate kin nipi kte.

Tribal Data Sovereignty



James Rattling Leaf

Founder, Wolakota Lab, LLC

Tribal data sovereignty refers to the right of Indigenous Tribes or Nations to control and govern their own data. It emphasizes the autonomy and self-determination of Indigenous communities in managing and utilizing their data in ways that align with their cultural values, traditions, and priorities.

In many cases, data sovereignty is seen as a response to the historical and ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous communities regarding the collection, use, and ownership of their data. This includes concerns about privacy, cultural sensitivity, and the potential misuse of data collected from Indigenous populations.

Efforts to promote tribal data sovereignty often involve developing policies and frameworks that respect the rights of Indigenous communities to have control over their data. This can include legal and regulatory measures to ensure that data collected from or about Indigenous peoples is used ethically and with their consent.

The concept of tribal data sovereignty aligns with broader discussions on data sovereignty, where communities or nations assert their right to control data within their borders or related to their citizens. In the context of Indigenous communities, it specifically addresses the unique challenges and considerations tied to their cultural heritage and collective rights.

A NOTE FROM WILD12 ORGANIZERS



Out of respect for the 12th World Wilderness Congress' hosts and their generous invitation to the world to join them on their territory, we ask that all delegates respect the people and information shared during this gathering by adhering to the following:

- 1.** Attribute all knowledge acquired to those who shared it.
- 2.** Do not take and/or use knowledge out of context or without permission to do so.
- 3.** Do whatever possible to ensure the original knowledge holders benefit from the use of their knowledge, and are not harmed by such.

We also ask delegates to be thoughtful about the way they appreciate Lakota culture, being careful to not appropriate ideas and forms of expression unique to the Lakota without their expressed consent.

Thank you.



Schedule

Wild 12

12TH WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS

Registration:

Check-in begins Sunday, August 25 at noon in The Monument atrium and is available daily from 8 am to 3 pm.

Plan your activities at the 12th World Wilderness Congress with our helpful app!

- Stay up-to-date with the latest news and announcements
- Have your schedule available at your fingertips
- Create your profile and engage with other delegates

Access and download the app [HERE](#).
Login on your browser [HERE](#).

Or scan the QR code below to begin.



Note, if you registered on August 25th or after, it will take our team some time to get you set up. Please be patient with us.

Venue Layout / The Monument



Level 1:

LaCroix Halls (A-D); Treaty Council & Elders Room (102); Fine Arts Theatre; Fine Arts Theater Lobby; Barnett Fieldhouse; and Concourses

Level 2:

Upper Level East (Alpine; Aspen; Canyon; Cedar; Ponderosa; and Spruce Rooms), and Upper Level West (Contact Session Rooms 205, 206 and The Monument Boardroom)

Art Alley WILD12 Murals:

Downtown Rapid City, between 6th and 7th, and Main and Saint Joseph Streets

Please note that some events are intended to be Indigenous-only.

Not sure if you are Indigenous? Or feel strongly that everyone is?

We recognize that all peoples originally descended from a place and thus have Indigenous origins. And, for the purposes of this invitation and effort, and in line with internationally recognized conventions, when we refer to Indigenous Peoples, we are referring to communities and peoples who continue to share collective ancestral ties to the lands, waters, and life where they live, occupy or from which they have been displaced by invasion, attempted genocide, forced removal, including for the creation of so called 'Protected Areas.' If you would like more information, please refer to the fact sheet from the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples.

Schedule

SUNDAY, 25 AUGUST – WILD12 Opening

Location - Fine Arts Theater, The Monument

Digital Art Show - Lobby, Fine Arts Theatre

Exhibits - Concourses

5:00 pm - 5:45 pm Photo Exhibit: Staffan Widstrand photography display on Sweden's Big 5

6:00 pm - 9:30 pm Official Congress Opening

Speakers:

- **Chief Arvol Looking Horse**, 19th keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Pipe and Bundle
- **Phil Two Eagle**, Executive Director, Sicangu Treaty Council, WILD12 Executive Director
- **Amy Lewis**, CEO, Wild.org; WILD12 Executive Organizer
- **Andrew Muir**, CEO, Wilderness Foundation Global
- **Bittu Sahgal**, Co-Chair, WILD11 (pre-recorded)
- **Meryl Harrell**, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Cultural Demonstrations:

- **Emmanuel Black Bear and Creekside Singers**
- **Maidi Andersson**, Sámi reindeer herder and board member, Sámi multi-national reindeer herding association (SSR)



MONDAY, 26 AUGUST- Plenary Day 1

Location - Fine Arts Theater, The Monument

8:00 am – 9:30 am Ceremony, Prayer, & Story

Speakers:

- **Chief Arvol Looking Horse**, 19th keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Pipe and Bundle
- **Henry Quick Bear Sr.**, Cultural Manager, Sicangu Lakota Early Childhood Program
- **Richard Moves Camp**, Fifth-generation Lakota healer, tribal historian and spiritual leader

9:30 am – 10:00 am Break

10:00 am - 11:15 pm Regional Indigenous Wilderness Conservation

Speakers:

- **Victor Douville**, Professor and Program Coordinator of Lakota Studies, Sinte Gleska University
- **Greg Cajete**, Native American Educator, Artist, Scholar of Herbalism and Holistic Health
- **Reed Robinson**, Director of Tribal Relations, U.S. Forest Service

11:15 am - 11:25 pm Keynote

- **Meryl Harrell**, Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture

11:30 am - 11:50 pm Regional Indigenous Wilderness Conservation

- **Ben Bobowski**, Superintendent, NPS Wrangell-St.Elias National Park and Preserve

11:50 am - 12:20 pm Keynote - Wilderness and Co-Stewardship within NPS

- **Dorothy FireCloud**, Native American Affairs Liaison, US National Parks Service
- **Charles F. Sams III**, Director, US National Parks Service

12:20 pm – 1:45 pm Lunch Break

1:45 pm - 2:25 pm Cultural Performance by Starr Chief Eagle

2:25 pm – 5:30 pm Global Indigenous and Local Community Wilderness Conservation

Panel Discussion - Relationship Between Achieving Global Biodiversity Framework Spatial Targets and Expanding Indigenous Land Tenure

- **Andrea Carmen**, Executive Director, International Indian Treaty Council
- **Samuel Munck**, Programme Officer, The Tenure Facility
- **Fany Kuiru Castro**, General Coordinator, COICA
- **Ramson Karmushu**, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, Field and Research Coordinator, Indigenous Movement for Peace and Transformation in Northern Kenya (IMPACT)
- **Stephen Woodley**, Former Science Chair, World Commission on Protected Areas
- **Swati Hingorani**, Global Coordinator 30x30 Initiative, IUCN

Speakers:

- **Daniel Wildcat**, Professor, Haskell Indian Nations University
- **Nombe Ganame**, Field Director, community-led Mali Elephant Project (pre-recorded)
- **Chance Weston**, Director of Strategy and Lakota Land Systems, Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation
- **Sarah James**, Arctic Village Spokesperson and Activist, Goldman Environmental Prize Winner
- **Chief Tashka Yawanawá**, Chief of the Yawanawá people

6:00 pm - 6:45 pm Photo Exhibit: Patricio Robles Gil Photography Exhibit and Reception: Extinction Rituals

Monday Evening Events

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm **Indigenous-Only Assembly** hosted by Oceti Sakowin
(dinner provided by Honor the Earth and GCILL from 6-7 PM)

Location - Barnett Fieldhouse, The Monument

This **Indigenous-only** assembly is a time for the global Indigenous community attending WILD12 to gather to share stories, reflections, and perspectives. Delegates are to present greetings and messages from their nation to the Oceti Sakowin territory.

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm All Delegate Reception (*heavy appetizers provided*)

Location - LaCroix Hall, The Monument



TUESDAY, 27 AUGUST- Plenary Day 2

Location - Fine Arts Theater, The Monument

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

8:00 am - 9:10 am Ceremony, Prayer, & Story

Speakers:

- **Henry Quick Bear Sr.**, Cultural Manager, Sicangu Lakota Early Childhood Program
- **Richard Moves Camp**, Fifth-generation Lakota healer, tribal historian, and spiritual leader
- **Rick Two Dogs**, Cultural Advisor, "Interpreter of the Sacred"
- **Ilarion Mercurieff**, President and Founder, Global Center for Indigenous Leadership and Lifeways

9:15 am – 9:30 am

- **Krystal Two Bulls**, Executive Director, Honor the Earth

9:30 am – 10:00 am Break

10:00 am – 10:35 am Extinction Rituals by Patrico Robles Gil, Visual Artist

10:35 am -11:35 am Resource Mobilization for Wilderness and Indigenous Stewards

Panel - Resource Mobilization for Wilderness and Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities:

Panelists:

- **Ralph Chami**, Co-Founder, Blue Green Future (pre-recorded)
- **Ramson Karmushu**, Field and Research Coordinator, Indigenous Movement for Peace and Transformation in Northern Kenya (IMPACT)
- **Sinclair Vincent**, Director, Sustainable Development Innovation, VERRA
- **Moderator, Yen Parico**, Director, CoalitionWILD

11:40-12:00PM IUCN Indigenous-led Greenlist Site

- **Pedro Gamboa Moquillaza**, Director of Conservation and Social Articulation

12:00 -12:20PM Data Sovereignty and Just Compensation for Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge

- **James Rattling Leaf**, Principal, Wolakota Lab, LLC; Co-Founder, Group on Earth Observations Indigenous Alliance

12:25-12:45 Lakota Women and All Our Relations

- **Velma Kills Back**, Educator

12:50 pm – 1:50 pm Lunch Break

1:50 pm – 2:45 pm Cultural Performance by Michael Charton, Leave Some for the Honey Badger

2:45 pm - 4:40 pm Stewarding the Wild Commons: Oceans, Polar Regions, and the Sovereign Wild

Speakers & Panelists:

- **Cristina Mittermeier**, Founder, Sea Legacy; NatGeo Explorer
- **Sylvia Earle**, Founder, Mission Blue
- **Kevin Chang**, Executive Director, KUA
- **Cormac Cullinan**, Founder, EnAct; Director, Cullinan and Associates; Co-founder, Antarctica Alliance
- **Maidi Andersson**, Sámi reindeer herder and board member, Sámi multi-national reindeer herding association (SSR)
- **Hinano Teavai-Murphy**, Cultural Director, Tetiaroa Society

4:40 – 4:55 PM African Sacred Sites as a Category of Protected Areas: Youth Perspective on Wilderness Looking Forward

- **Aiita Apamaku**, Wildlife Biologist; National Geographic Explorer; Darwin200 Leader; Co-Founder, Terra NatureWILD Conservation

5:00-5:20 A Place for Spirit

- **Meda Dewitt**, Interim Alaska Director, The Wilderness Conservation Society; Traditional healer

5:25-5:45 PM Prayer and Wild Voices

- **Claude Two Elk**, Chair, Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council

5:45 pm - 6:00 pm Special Presentation

6:00 pm - 6:45 pm Photo Exhibit: Jaime Rojo Monarch Photo Display & NatGeo signing


Tuesday Evening Events

7:00 pm - 10:00 pm Public Indigenous People & Conservation Assembly (all delegates invited)

Location - Barnett Fieldhouse, The Monument

WEDNESDAY, 28 AUGUST – Tour Day

Tours to Wind Cave National Park and Bear Butte State Park in collaboration with the Oceti Sakowin Oyate, WILD Foundation, South Dakota Native Tourism Alliance, U.S. National Park Service, Sicangu Youth Council, and Bear Butte State Park. Sign-up online or during registration to join an Indigenous-led tour to these sacred sites in the Black Hills.



THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST – Convention Of Delegates

During “Convention of Delegates”, congress participants “delegates” join concurrent sessions to share information, problem-solve, and build unity across cultural, and political boundaries.

Global Forum Concurrent Sessions 8:00 am – 5:30 pm

Locations - The Monument Rooms: Ponderosa, Alpine, Aspen, Canyon, Cedar, Spruce, LaCroix A, LaCroix B, LaCroix C, LaCroix D, Fine Arts Theatre, Concourse

*Please refer to the WILD12 app to view speaker information and for the most accurate and up to date schedule.

International Film Festival and Panel discussions

Location - Fine Arts Theatre

Film - “There is a Place on Earth” by Ellen van der Honert Q&A

Panel - The role of visual art and storytelling in conservation

Film - “Condor Restoration” by Patricio Robles Gil

Film - “Bear 399: Queen of the Tetons” by Tom Mangelsen Q&A

Film - “El Canyon del Diablo and Wild Bison” by Alejandro Espinosa Q&A

Film - “Caribou Homeland”

Film - “Last Call” by Ivan Carrillo Q&A

Panel - Communication, Storytelling, and Conservation

Symposium - Global Gathering Of Knowledge, Wisdom, And Ways Of Knowing

Symposium sessions include oral presentation, panel or round-table discussions, poster sessions, and other platforms for storytelling and sharing ideas. Contributions that address terrestrial and marine wilderness topics (for instance, management and stewardship, collaborative governance, biodiversity conservation, human-wildlife interactions, climate change) within the following themes:

- *Indigenous perspectives, ways of knowing, and wilderness meanings*
- *Humanities, arts, creativity, and environmental philosophy*
- *Justice, accountability, Indigenous sovereignty, and restored rights*
- *Campaigns, Youth led-coalitions, community conservation, and citizen science*
- *Connecting, restoring, expanding, and rewilding landscapes*
- *Opportunities and challenges of green finance, public-private partnerships, and tourism*
- *Ecological benefits, cultural meanings, physical/mental health, and intrinsic values*
- *Applications of technology and data science*

Poster Session - Concourses (presentations will occur during lunch)

Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus* - Lifeways, Sovereignty & Seven Generations

Location - LaCroix A

Hosted by the Global Center for Indigenous Leadership and Lifeways founder Ilarion Mercurieff and Shay Sloan Clarke with Anita Sanchez, Britt Gondolfi, Catherine Murupaenga-Ikenn, Dune Lankard, Galina Angarova, George Pletnikoff, Joannah Tindongan, Kiera Kolson, Lewis Cardinal, Marie 'Arnaq' Meade, Meda DeWitt, Mona Polacca, Pat McCabe, and more.

This Indigenous-only* forum is a time for the global Indigenous community attending WILD12 to gather to share stories, reflections, and perspectives on what is most important and essential at this time for helping Mother Earth. We encourage Indigenous attendees to come prepared to share: Where are you from? What are your people going through? What are the challenges that you have that may inform other Indigenous peoples of what we can do now to help Mother Earth? We will work toward achieving consensus on the most impactful and essential actions and next steps coming out of WILD12 that can help Mother Earth, worldwide, from an Indigenous perspective. This two-day forum will begin and complete in ceremony, and is designed as a space for Indigenous Peoples to meet according to local protocol, in the round, without agenda, according to Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Attendees are encouraged to join for the entire forum, or as many sessions as possible. *Global Indigenous Stewardship Perspectives*

Symposium Track - Global Indigenous Stewardship Perspectives

Location - LaCroix B

Topics: Reconciliation through Collaborative Management: Recognizing Indigenous peoples as equal partners in wildland management; An Omushkego Cree Perspective on Indigenous-Led Conservation; Knowledge sharing on Indigenous-led conservation initiatives in Canada; Wise Practices for Wilderness Stewardship: Launch of the International Case Study Report

Speakers: Mary Beth Moss (Daaka Xoo Xéi), Darlene See, Linda Moon Stumpff, Dawn Sherman, BJ Cruse, Lawrence Martin, Vicki Sahanatien, Calvin Lincez Barb Duffin, Paul Crowley

Oceti Sakowin Oyate Track

Location - LaCroix C

Topics: Maka Sitomniya; Grandfathers Alter: Five Generations of Lakota Holy Men; Prayer, Lakota Astronomy

Speakers: Henry Quick Bear Sr, Rick Two Dogs, Richard Moves Camp, Claude Two Elk, Victor Douville

Relationships through Reconciliation and Stewardship

Location - LaCroix D

Topics: Settler Organization Framework for Conserving Wilderness and Indigenous Culture; Reconciliation, Repatriation, & Restoration: working together to recognize Indigenous people's homelands, cultures, and stewardship; Implementation of Joint Secretarial Order: Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters; The Origins of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations and Sacred Site Policy; Indigenous stewardship and expanding our relationship with nature: perspectives, approaches, and case studies.

Speakers: Eric Reder, Merick Young, Mia Feroletto, Summer Afraid Of Hawk, Chase Iron Eyes, Dorothy Firecloud,; Susan Johnson, Reed Robinson, Joel Holtrop, Oishimaya Sen Nag, Mirali Shukla, Chelsea Muise, Jason Kahn, Carlie Ideker

Methods and Approaches for Wilderness Management

Location - Ponderosa

Topics: Rethinking Wilderness in a Digital Age; Using Geospatial Methods for Wilderness Research and Stewardship; Planning For Uncertainty: Wilderness Conservation and Management Under Climate Change; Wilderness Character Monitoring: An Interagency Update on Implementation of Keeping It Wild 2

Speakers: Eric Keeling, Asher Jay, Chris Dunn, Christy Caudill, Jonathan Schechter, Erik Beever, Steve Carver, Yue Cao, Katherine Zeller, Rob Burrows, Kira Hefty, Clare Boerigter, Jennifer Wilkening, Christina Boston, Roger Semler, Marissa Edwards, Erin Drake, Cody Moran

Campaigning for Cultural, Social, and Ecological Landscapes

Location - Alpine

Topics: Big picture, big ambition, big vision: the basis of a successful campaign is a powerful, ambitious, and collaborative vision; Talking with people; Engaging Landowners; Big Cats and border politics: recovering jaguars in the United States; Campaign in Iceland to Protect Endangered Fin Whales.

Speakers: Karl Wagner, Chris Armatas, Michael Grover, Anne Henny, Hannah Timmins, Stacy James, Linda Moon Stumpff, Stephanie Barron, Asher Jay, Jayden Gunn, Christophe Bugbee, Kushagra Meshram, Jennifer Gooden, Aletris Neils, Megan "Turtle" Southern, Micah Garen

Collaboration, Partnership, and Community Conservation

Location - Cedar

Topics: Successful Public-Private Partnerships Across the Globe; Restoring the American Bison Beyond Fenced Boundaries; An exploration of case studies and models used for collaboration and landscape scale conservation; Messaging to your Market: A snappy guide to understanding demographics and choosing the best tools for your needs

Speakers: Pamela Lanier, Yamel Guadalupe, Anaya Olguin, Mark Jordahl, Leigh Welling, Milton Haar, Blake McCann, Gregory Schroeder, Summer Afraid of Hawk, Lorenzo Rosenzweig and Jennifer Gooden Tomasz Wiercioch, Avery Tilley, Valeska Ruiz Peña, Ulrich Stocker and Meike Schulz; Pamela Lanier, Felisa Rogers, Giulia Gasparrini, Jackie Batrus

Rewilding, Restoring, and Connecting Social and Ecological Systems

Location - Canyon

Topics: Act30: Mapping Diverse and Effective Pathways to Conserve 30% of our Planet; Connectivity and decision-making in a world of human influence; Conserving the Wilderness of Sweeping Grasslands; Species reintroductions, translocations, and recovery programmes and the potential role of wilderness

Speakers: Natalie Cox, Ramson Karmushu, Ariana Kim, Tracy Farrell, Swati Hingorani, Lenjirr, Samson Parsimei, Sean Parks, Travis Belote, Kira Hefty, Erinn Drage, William Snow, Fernando Sanchez, Hannah Timmons, Nigel Dudley, Alan Watson, Tim Tear, Kent Redford, Marius Costin Nistorescu, Linde De Vroey, Stephen Woodley, Kellie Carim, Sean Parks

Storytelling, Mentorship, and Youth Voices

Location - Aspen

Topics: Passing the Torch of Our Stories: How to elevate intergenerational stories and mentor emerging leadership in conservation; The Power and Leverage of Storytelling, Cultural Practitioners, and Young People; Spiritual dimensions of wilderness, and bridging the human-nature divide; Letting Go and Embracing Change: 5 Element Journey; Elevating Youth Voices | Insights from National Geographic Youth Leaders

Speakers: Nicole Reese, Aiita Joshua Apamaku, Yose Cormier, Fatima Gigante, Challie Facemire, Tatyana Feiner, Andrea Alvarez Perez, Vinamra Mathur, Robert Kim/Cash, Kat Haber, David Chojnacky, D., Jason Bausher, Connie Zareen Delaney, Anita Sanchez, Nahua (Aztec) and Toltec, JT Hardin, Joshua Apamaku, Aiita Avery Tilley, Gabriela Tejeda, Ineza Umuhoza Grace

Values, Meanings, and Relevance of Wilderness

Location - Spruce

Topics: Voice of the Ocean; Elevating Nature's Legal Status: Protecting the Rights of the Natural World; Encountering Antarctic Wilderness: Rethinking Relationship, Values, and Rights; The universal values of wilderness?; Women and wilderness

Speakers: Hinano Teavai-Murphy; Kelsey Leonard; Britt Gondolfi; Casey Camp-Horinek; Linda Sheehan; Yu-Fai Leung; Danii Kehler; Cormac Cullinan; Courtney Hotchkiss; Christopher Dunn; Yose Cormier; Esteban Barriga Abril; Jo Roberts; Arthur Obst; Linde De Vroey; Jo Roberts; Lauren Redmore; Francesca Mahoney; Patricia Seiser; Anne Lewis

Contact sessions: Resolutions and Declarations

Locations - 205, 206

FRIDAY, 30 AUGUST - Convention Of Delegates

Global Forum, Concurrent Sessions 8:00 am – 5:30 pm

Locations - The Monument

Rooms: Ponderosa, Alpine, Aspen, Canyon, Cedar, Spruce, LaCroix A, LaCroix B, LaCroix C, LaCroix D, Fine Arts Theatre, Concourse

International Film Festival and Panel discussions

Location - Fine Arts Theatre

Featuring:

Film - “Paving Tundra” by Jayme Dittmar: Q&A

Film - “A Buffalo Story” followed by panel discussion

Film - “Bring them Home” by Ivan Macdonald, Ivy MacDonald and Daniel Glick: Q&A with Intertribal Buffalo Council (ITBC)

Film - “Komo Urue (The Children of the Jungle)” and presentation by Fany Kuiru, Coordinator General for COICA

Film - “Oyate” by Emil Benjamin followed by a presentation from Jennifer Martel

Global Indigenous Peoples Caucus* - Lifeways, Sovereignty & Seven Generations

Location - LaCroix A

This Indigenous-only forum is a time for the global Indigenous community attending WILD12 to gather to share stories, reflections, and perspectives*

Global Indigenous Stewardship Perspectives

Location - LaCroix B

Topics: Indigenous Stewardship: Conservation through Relationship; Stewardship and pathways to more effective application of indigenous and local knowledge; Stories from the Field: Establishing and Financing Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) in Canada; Colonial systems, ongoing conflict, and healing for the future

Speakers: Nadine Spence; Cindy Boyko; Vivian Delgado; Larry Gorenflo; Jessica Cloutier; Amanda Grace Santos; Darcy Riddell; Terry Dorward; David Flood; Steven Nitah; Randi Russell; Brice Hanberry; Clayton Daughenbaugh; Adrienne Lindholm; Jon Naranjo

Oceti Sakowin Oyate Track

Location - LaCroix C

Topics: Roles of the Lakota Woman and Unci Maka; Inherent Sovereignty; Doctrine of Domination; Legal Overview of Treaty Depredation in the Black Hills

Speakers: Henry Quick Bear Sr.; Velma Kills Back; Dr. Stephanie Little Hawk-Big Crow; Steven T. Newcomb; Andy Reid

Relationships through Reconciliation and Stewardship

Location - LaCroix D

Topics: Working together to reconcile historical trauma and ongoing conflicts; Lakota Youth and the Environment; Culture Through Art: A Celebration of Native American Expression

Speakers: Estelle Thomson; Elain (Lan Yin) Hsiao; Susan Canney; Pamela Lanier; Sina Beareagle; Mark Tilsen; Clementine Bordeaux; Emmy Her Many Horses

Methods and Approaches for Wilderness Management

Location - Ponderosa

Topics: Broadening Wilderness Narratives on Wilderness Connect

Speakers: Heidi Blair; Lauren Redmore; Jaclyn Rushing

Campaigning for Cultural, Social, and Ecological Landscapes

Location - Alpine

Topics: From stakeholder conflicts to campaign initiatives; The Lands Between: An Indigenous-led campaign to protect the forgotten landscape between Bears Ears and Canyons of the Ancients; Protecting Wildness by Protecting Culture - Insights from the No Ambler Road Movement in Alaska; Roundtable on Successful Campaigning

Speakers: Silvia Daniela Borlea; Jess Abrahams; Mark Jordahl; Ulrich Stöcker; Esteban Barriga Abril; Matthew Kirby; Erika Pollard; Alfred Lomahquahu; Carleton Bowekaty; Davina Smith; Jayme Dittmar; Rico DeWilde; Naaweyaa Tagaban; Deenaalee Hodgdon; Jazmyn Vent; Alex Johnson; Karl Wagner

Collaboration, Partnership, and Community Conservation

Location - Cedar

Topics: Reflecting on the governance of governance assessment through role-playing; Challenges and opportunities of sustainable commerce; Stewarding Urban-Proximate Wilderness in a time of change: Towards a multi-faceted toolbox ; Places of wildness against the rising tide of environmental nihilism; Action on Environment and Conservation in Danger

Speakers: Jessica Campese; Jennifer Kelleher; Melanie Zurba; Asher Jay; Samin Vargas; Yamel Guadalupe Anaya; Tanja Andrejasic Wechsler; Chris Armatas; Suzanne Cable; Heather MacSllarrow; Bob Dvorak; Lauren Redmore; Katherine Snow; Andrew Scanlon; Aelita Totskaya

Rewilding, Restoring, and Connecting Social and Ecological Systems

Location - Canyon

Topics: Innovation, change, and interconnectedness: From engineering to the humanities; IUCN CEM Rewilding Guidelines Roundtable; Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and Wilderness

Speakers: James Edwards; Jacob van de Sande; Grant Reiner; Zdenka Krenova and Dalibor Dostal; Steve Carver; Ian Convery; Sally Hawkins; Erinn Drage; Stephen Woodley; Alison Woodley; Nigel Dudley

Methods and Approaches for Wilderness Management

Location - Aspen

Topics: Techniques and approaches to manage, protect, and expand wilderness; Sharing and learning: Indigenous perspectives on ranger and community relationships

Speakers: Steve Carver; Snæbjörn Guðmundsson; Brad Borst; Dusty Vaughn; Babajide Agboola; Andrew Seguya; Sue Stolton; Hannah Timmons; Dusty Vaughn; Mónica Álvarez Malvido; Ashley Du; Ariana Kim; Katie Kolcusky; Chris Riccardo; Andrew Muir; Ian Michler

Values, Meanings, and Relevance of Wilderness

Location - Spruce

Topics: Human-Nature Relationships in the Anthropocene: perspectives from social science, art, and law

Speakers: Ian McCallum; Ian Michler; Jessica Owley; Ileana Porras; Karen Bradshaw

Contact Sessions Regarding Resolutions

Locations - 205, 206

Photo Exhibit: Deforestation of Boreal Forests in Sweden & Sapmi - Marcus Westberg

5:00 pm - 5:45 pm

Friday Evening Events

International Indigenous Conservation Film Festival

6:30 pm – 10:00 pm

Location - Fine Arts Theatre, The Monument

Films featured:

- Path of the Panther (pre-recorded message by Carlton Ward)
- *Tahnaanooku* Q&A with Justin Deegan
- Film and presentation by Cristina Mittermeier



SATURDAY, 31 AUGUST - General Assembly And Closing Ceremony

Location - Fine Arts Theater, The Monument

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

On Saturday, August 31st, delegates reconvene to vote on/adopt WILD12's resolutions and set the global wilderness conservation agenda for the next 4-5 years.

ONGOING SHOWS THROUGHOUT WILD12 CONGRESS

Poster presentations, Location - The Monument concourses

Cultural art, Location - The Monument concourse

Art Alley murals, Location - downtown Rapid City
Between 6th and 7th, and Main and Saint Joseph Streets

Exhibition, Location - The Monument concourse

Additional spaces reserved for the Congress include:

Treaty Council and Elders Room (102)

Media Room (205)



WILD12 is proud to work with Cheyenne River Tribe artist, **Leland Benoist**, who has created for the Congress the above mural which can be viewed in downtown Rapid City, in Art Alley, located between 6th and 7th Street, and Main and Saint Joseph Streets. Mr. Benoist is also a descendant of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and creates artwork because it allows him the space to heal through self-expression.







Resolutions

12th WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS RESOLUTION GUIDELINES

The World Wilderness Congress is unique among civil society environmental forums as it provides the public a direct and concrete instrument for setting the global environmental agenda: resolutions. We invite all WILD12 delegates to participate in the resolution process, engaging with other delegates in polite and purposeful conversation and creating meaningful steps towards common ground and next actions we can and should take as an international wilderness movement.

How to Participate:

- **Sign up via the WILD12 App to present feedback at resolution contact sessions.**

Contact Sessions will occur between the afternoon of August 28 and the evening of August 30. Space is limited and these can only be held for *some* planned resolutions.

- **Submit a “Spontaneous” Resolution Between August 27 and 3 PM August 30.**

Space is limited. Should you develop a spontaneous resolution during the Congress, email Adam Hanson (adam@wild.org) and Tori Pfaeffle (tori@wild.org) and include in your subject line “Spon W12 Resolution.” Space is limited as to what can be featured on the final day of the Congress, August 31.

- **Vote on Resolution in plenary on Saturday, August 31.**

Planned resolutions will be voted on in plenary and WILD will record and publish these vote totals. This number can be used for advocacy purposes in future efforts.

- **Endorse resolutions as a signatory.**

- **Adopt resolutions into your organization's core policy objectives or procedures.**

Additional information about resolutions process and guidelines is available on the WILD12 app.

***The Resolution proposals below are ‘Zero Drafts’.**

***Please visit [WILD12 App](#) or www.wild12.org under Plan for the most up-to-date version of ‘Zero Draft’ resolutions**

“For the first time in history, this Congress is being convened by a First Nation. It’s going to be of historical proportions.”

Cristina Mittermeier,

Marine Biologist,
Photographer & Co-Founder,
SeaLegacy



THE HE SAPA RESOLUTION #1

On Sovereignty and Wilderness: Deepening the Wilderness Concept Through Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom

PREAMBLE

Given the reality that wild nature on land, water, and sea is fast disappearing and is an irreplaceable necessity for the health and well-being of all life, we recognize the urgent need for all people to have a common language that can support a call-to-action for the preservation of Earth's biosphere. To generate this consistency, the Westernized concept of 'wilderness' needs to evolve, deepen, and strengthen through recognizing and reflecting Indigenous science, knowledge, thought, and wisdom. The He Sapa Declaration, upon which this resolution is based, provides more context, and asks no tribe, nation, or person to replace their word for free nature. It asks that the evolved concept of wilderness called for in this resolution—one that acknowledges the sovereignty of all lifeforms and is inclusive of Indigenous perspectives—be accepted and used by Western conservation to assist with keeping nature whole, and in our collective action to safeguard the sacred, biodiverse, and sovereign nature of life on Earth.

WHEREAS

Acknowledging that many protected wilderness and other natural areas were established on lands that were and/or remain sovereign territories of Indigenous Nations; that some protected and wilderness areas were achieved in ways problematic and harmful to Indigenous peoples; and that genuine healing and reconciliation is required.

Understanding the need to adhere to Indigenous rights as enunciated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), as a baseline, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (especially Article 8(j)), and also to the universal need for humans to respect and act responsibly to each other and all life on Earth.

Acknowledging that many Indigenous Peoples have kept and keep wild places healthy and intact while also acknowledging Western conservation has done the same in many instances.

Accepting fully that Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Systems (IKWS) contain specific, place-based information, management wisdom, law, policy, and guidance.

Acknowledging that both traditional Indigenous and Western sciences are both critical informants of a more holistic philosophy and practice of wilderness conservation.

Recognizing that the current ('Western') wilderness concept and related policy (the international standard of which is called Category 1B and is the responsibility of the Wilderness Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas) requires more depth and strengthening through close collaboration with, understanding of, and integration (in word and thought) of Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Systems (IKWS).

Knowing that this resolution will help transform and strengthen the broader meaning of wilderness, and in turn also increases the likelihood that Indigenous Peoples and other 'non-western' cultures can more effectively communicate with each other and build collaborative management approaches.

THEREFORE

The delegates to the 12th World Wilderness Congress (WILD12), convening in He Sapa, the Black Hills of the Oceti Sakowin Oyate are hereby

RESOLVED

That all relevant institutions, governments and civil society in all sectors at all levels:

- 1.** Include language and protocols for the recognition and implementation of and responsibilities to all life, and the recognition where relevant and possible of the customary governance systems of regional Indigenous communities, and do so before initiating any development/protection plan following Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC); and throughout the process of designating wilderness or other protected areas on land, water and sea.
- 2.** Actively promote wilderness policy that acknowledges that nature is multi-dimensional, transcending the material and physical realms; and use language that honors the rights and roles of Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Systems, natural and customary law.
- 3.** Elevate awareness of IUCN Wilderness Category 1B within institutions, organizations, governments, nations and the public at all levels as an opportunity for protected area designation and management in the future, and urge more comprehensive and far-reaching actions to initiate, integrate, and support Indigenous management or co-management and stewardship of these Category 1B Wilderness Protected Areas.
- 4.** Recognize that the science-based, international call for protecting 30% of Earth by 2030 (working towards Half, the science-based target) that is necessary for the protection of biodiversity can only be achieved by strengthening the sovereignty of and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples practicing wise stewardship of nature.

5. Require relevant authorities to understand and implement means for adhering to Indigenous science, knowledge, and wisdom and the best of contemporary science within a framework of legal pluralism, to determine the best possible conservation management, goals, and methods.

6. Ensure that networks of sacred natural sites and territories sustained by Indigenous Peoples and others for ceremonial purposes, and for the intrinsic value of the area(s), are recognized as an essential part of wilderness and/or in another relevant, distinct category of protected areas, with the customary governance systems of the custodial communities recognized and protected within these designations.

7. Actively and publicly support and collaborate with Indigenous Peoples so that they can stay on their lands, should they wish, and prioritize empowering them to defend their sovereignty, traditional lifeways, and the land, waters, and seas upon which they depend.

PROPOSERS

Name: Gwen Bridge
Position: Gwen Bridge Consulting
Country: Canada
Email: gwen@gwenbridge.com

Name: Vance G Martin
Position: Wilderness Foundation Global (President Emeritus)
Country: USA/South Africa
Email: vance@wildernessglobal.org

Name: Meda DeWitt and Starlyn Miller
Position: Team Indigenous
Country: USA
Email: admin@sanctuaryearthproject.org

SECONDERS

Name: Amy Lewis
Position: CEO, WILD.org
Country: USA
Email: amy@wild.org

Name: Philimon Two Eagle
Title: Executive Director, Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council
Country: Hé Sapa
Email: phil.twoeagle@rst-nsn.gov

Name: Andrew Muir
Position: CEO, Wilderness Foundation Global
Country: South Africa
Email: andrew@wfa.africa

Name: Vance G Martin
Position: Wilderness Specialist Group (IUCN, WCPA)
Country: Global
Email: vance@wildernessglobal.org

Name: Ilarion Mercurieff
Title: Founder, Global Center for Indigenous Leadership & Lifeways
Country: USA
Email: imercurieff@gmail.com

Name: Shay Sloan Clarke
Title: Executive Director, Global Center for Indigenous Leadership & Lifeways
Country: USA
Email: director@gcill.world

Name: Jo Roberts
Position: CEO, Wilderness Foundation UK
Country: United Kingdom
Email: jo@wildernessfoundation.org.uk

Name: Cherryl Curry
Position: CEO, Wilderness Leadership School
Country: South Africa
Email: ceo@wildernesstrails.org.za



THE HE SAPA DECLARATION

On Sovereignty and Wilderness: Deepening the Wilderness Concept Through Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom

PREAMBLE

The intent of this Declaration is to expand the respect, common ground, equality, and trust amongst people who help steward wild places. Accomplishing this will create a stronger, more effective cross-cultural alliance for the protection of Mother Earth in a time of great peril for our common home. We believe that all people need a word and concept for a relationship with nature that is respectful and holistic, and that is neither subjective nor exploitative. We worked as a group of many core members and reviewers spanning many cultures. We reached out globally to diverse cultures, receiving valuable feedback from many areas (though more from the North (we refer to as ‘Western’) than the South, thus far...and note that this Declaration is an on-going process). We as a working group of 15 members plus many reviewers spanning many cultures, engaged in a deep examination of the word “wilderness” to understand its history and the underlying meanings for many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in order to better understand and learn from the intense and, sometimes, negative sentiments that surface regarding this concept.

In our ongoing exploration of wilderness and Indigenous perspectives of the natural environment, we endeavored to acknowledge the complexities inherent in the relationship between Indigenous People and the Western concept of wilderness. Relationality, as a central tenet of many Indigenous worldviews, underscores the interconnectedness of all beings and the environments they inhabit. This understanding exemplifies how Indigenous communities perceive their existence as being in a continuous relationship with the land rather than viewing it as a mere resource for recreation, food, or even spiritual experiences. Some Western interpretations of wilderness that have had the largest influence on its implementation disregard these profound connections, leading to a clash that perpetuates misunderstanding and dispossession. To move forward, it is vital to engage with both worldviews critically, seeking to reconcile and bridge the gaps that exist, and expand and strengthen the wilderness concept (and its implementation) through the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples. Doing so can foster a deeper appreciation of Indigenous relationships with the earth and create pathways towards a more respectful coexistence that honors both perspectives.

This Declaration is an attempt to balance multiple perspectives and worldviews. Doing so in English has inherent challenges as oral history carries so much information and subtle meanings, and is expressed in many and diverse Indigenous, non-English languages. We are at the beginning of a journey, and we recognize that every journey requires a first

step. This Declaration reflects a commitment to taking the first necessary steps, and those that will follow.

We believe in respecting and protecting the set of relations (ecological web of life) and responsibilities that sustain all Earth's sovereign life forms. These relations, of which we are a part, both bind and are bound by us: humanity. Our collective task is learning to live within ecological directives and reduce and mitigate colonial impositions on ecology. The ways and means for doing this are known by Indigenous Peoples, embodied in Indigenous knowledge and wisdom systems (IKWS), and practiced by Indigenous nations and communities that retain their traditional lifeways.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples have and continue to record knowledge and wisdom in story, directives, and laws that recognize the inherent inclusion of people in healthy and functional ecology. Indigenous Peoples excel at transforming knowledge into wise practices that establish natural law and authority over human-centered decision-making. For this reason, Indigenous societies are adept at acknowledging – in word, action, and law – that humans are beholden to the authority that decrees from our relationship with the natural world.

There are many names for this authority. Wilderness is one of them; a word endorsed by the delegates who convene at the 12th World Wilderness Congress (WILD12) in He Sapa, the sacred homelands and unceded territory of the Lakota Nation.

This Declaration primarily discusses the concept of wilderness. We recognize that wilderness in all its conceptualizations has many implementation pathways, such as formally designated Wilderness areas, Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, and others. The global outcome of this Declaration is to expand the meaning of “wilderness” in the English language for use within the Global Biodiversity Framework and other international protocols to include Indigenous knowledge and wisdom. We also recognize there are additional opportunities at this Congress for distinct declarations and resolutions to address broader issues concerning land, water, and seas, including “land back.”

This Congress convenes at a time when the precipitous destruction of wild places compels us to swift action and bold objectives for the protection of the lands, waters, and seas that are essential to all life, have inherent sovereignty, and are sacred in their own being. In many Indigenous societies, we understand that Earth was brought to life by a Creator. The Creator created all the things of the Earth, all the rocks, trees, water, plants, and animals; the ones in the air, the ones in the water, the ones who walk on land, and the ones in the soil. These things that came before humans established their relationships and acted in reciprocity. When humans emerged, they entered a set of social and ecological obligations into which they had to fit. To continue to fit in over time, they had to abide by the directives of those already here. As part of the original system, humans were pitiful. Over time as they responded to the system, in accordance to the obligations and existence of mutual laws, humans thrived.

Many of these obligations are centered around reciprocity. In return for being allowed to exist as part of these relationships, humans must integrate into and connect with all their relations. This belief held by many Indigenous lifeways (but not all) underscores the role of humans as subordinate to non-human rules and laws. IKWS informs us that as people we must behave with respect, reciprocity, relationality, and responsibility. It is those sets of relationships and directives that may also shape the Indigenous approach to wilderness, because wilderness was originally a concept to recognize the inherent sovereignty of those that were here before humans. The concept of wilderness is as much about the acknowledgement of this sovereignty as it is about a specific place.

MANY NAMES FOR WHOLE & HEALTHY PLACES

In our view, Earth is a network of physical life processes and also a sacred set of relationships. Different human lifeways have different manners of appreciating and naming this universally recognized principle. Indigenous thoughts, concepts, knowledge, and perspectives are not homogeneous but share similarities, and need to be understood in order to advance a truly accurate and contemporary concept of wilderness. The perspectives of these lifeways include, but are not limited to:

Maka Sitomniya (Lakota Oyate)

The English word 'biodiversity' refers only to physical ecology. Maka Sitomniya, on the other hand, encompasses the interconnectedness of the cosmos ecologically, physically, and spiritually. Another Lakota word closely connected to wilderness is manita, which has different meanings in different contexts and can simultaneously refer to spirit in addition to a location that has no borders, no ending, and no limits.

Indalo (Zulu/Xhosa)

In South Africa, this means Nature in its purest form, the highest expression of life and connection. It also refers to creation, where everything comes from. In a similar but more human-centric manner, Ubuntu encapsulates the interconnectedness of life especially among people, and the ideal state of respect and reciprocity therein, including the past, present, and future. Ubuntu is often translated to mean, "I am what I am because we are."

Whanaungatanga (Te Taiao)

The Māori use Whanaungatanga, a word which signifies the interconnectedness of all life, a web of relationships linking us to ancestors, future generations, and the natural world.

tmix^w (Okanagan)

Is translated from Nsyilxcen into English most often as – "all of creation" and also "world, nature, Earth." tmix^w is actually a system of relationships being reconstructed limitlessly and is the life-force of a place. It is understood that tmix^w is the cyclic spiral of regeneration experienced as tmx^wulax^w or the tmix^w-place. tmx^wulax^w is usually translated into English as country, land or world. However, the important difference is that Syilx view of land is as an ecological, dynamic system rather than a mental picture of the geography with its plants and animals.

Wilderness (European/North American Settler)

Wilderness (for those born into or influenced by European-settler culture) is difficult to define because, like Indigenous concepts of the systems of relationships that make up our world, it does not merely name a physical characteristic but also expresses spiritual and relational ideals. This expansive definition, and experience of wilderness is not often endorsed in a materialistic, individualistic, dominant culture. The dominant “Western” culture has mostly limited its understanding of wilderness to a set of physical characteristics and locations. Western culture and perspectives used colonialism to forcibly displace Indigenous concepts of understanding the Earth, thereby entrenching the belief of Western superiority. These colonial directives also assisted in the institutional erasure of a more expansive understanding of wilderness.

At the root of wilderness is “wild,” a word with many possible origins. The Oxford English Dictionary refers back to the place-based, cultural roots of the word and concludes that it “is most probable that the Old Germanic wilpijaz represents a pre-Germanic ghweltijos, the root of which is found in Welsh gwyllt, Irish geilt,” Gaelic words that mean “willed and untamed.” At the level of the community or the collective expressing its will and agency, this is also synonymous with sovereign.

Indigenous scholars have recognized this concept, including Jay Hansford Vest, who engaged in a deep exploration of the roots of the word wilderness. He concludes that the root of wilderness means ‘self-willed-land’ or ‘self-willed-place’ with an emphasis upon its own intrinsic volition. Vest writes:

“In wil-der-ness there is a ‘will-of-the-land’ and in wild there is ‘will of the animal.’ A wild animal is a ‘self-willed animal’ – an undomesticated animal – similarly, wildland is ‘self-willed land’... This ‘willed’ conception is itself in opposition with the controlled and ordered environment characteristic of the notion of ‘civilization.’ While control, order, domination and management are true of ‘western’ civilization and domestication, they are not essentials of primal culture. The primal peoples of northern Europe were not bent upon dominating and controlling all environments. Thus, their ‘will-of-the-land’ conception – wilderness – demonstrates a recognition of land in and for itself.” [2]

Here we see differentiations between two worldviews, one that believed that the Earth or people could be “tamed” or “untamed” as juxtaposed to that of many Indigenous cultures that regard such a view as akin to heresy. In a generalized Indigenous view, humans are in an inextricable relationship with the Earth and are obligated to conform to Earth’s natural law. Nevertheless, common ground exists in the belief that the Earth and its many places have inherent sovereignty.

COLONIZATION AND WILDERNESS

As Indigenous cultures and nations were decimated by colonialism, so too was the wild. Colonial culture carried out a protracted project of domination that continues to this day in many places and asserts human (Western-development) authority over the many nations of the Earth – human, animal, plant, and those more subtle energies that manifest through the mind and spirit.

The imperialistic agenda of Western colonization served economic aspirations, and often inappropriately used wilderness to advance Western well-being through exploitative, capitalistic activities and wealth accumulation that was promoted as critical for human (individual or collective) well-being. In the face of a contemporary ecological catastrophe, the accumulation of wilderness wealth (i.e. through protected area designation) is viewed as important for civilization. Care and watchfulness is required because economic purposes and mechanisms may also drive these assumptions that could create a kind of ecological capitalism that produces many of the uneven outcomes of economic capitalism. This occurs now because wilderness as a concept was co-opted by colonial perspectives to exploit people and resources. This is in contrast to the Indigenous Peoples' perspective that wilderness is the realization of the collective well-being of all things. There cannot be well-being without being "in relationship" and we are aware of no Indigenous concepts that endorse nature in unilateral service to human-derived objectives.

Indigenous Peoples inherently work in concert with the will of the land, recognizing the autonomy, free will, and self-governance of all beings. This relationship is foundational for understanding Natural Law. As Athabaskan Elder Wilson Justin articulates, the principles of permission and consent from nature are essential to this bond, underscoring the necessity of engaging with the environment in a respectful and reciprocal manner.

However, there are many Indigenous Peoples and beliefs that prescribe reciprocity of service to the rest of life as a necessary step for the achievement of collective well-being. Indigenous knowledge and wisdom systems describe mutualistic actions that benefit the web of life. We call upon conservation to anchor these principles into their worldview and place them at the center of the wilderness concept. The advent of the US Wilderness Act (1964) partially reinforced this process by recognizing special places where significant human impacts were not allowed so that the free-willed processes of nature could prevail and evolve. This is surely commendable, yet it should be noted (as was consistent with that era of policy and legislation) that the formulation of this pioneering Act had no consultation from Indigenous Peoples.

Wilderness may be the only word/concept within European languages that comes close to approximating the more encompassing terminologies originating from Indigenous worldviews. As such, many people are reluctant to abolish the term entirely as, without it, European and North American settler culture is bereft of any English language concept that acknowledges the natural world as sovereign and therefore worthy of respect. Without the

wilderness concept, what remains in English are sterile, inanimate terms - environment, ecosystem, biodiversity - or worse, a vocabulary based purely on the assumptions of exploitation (e.g. natural resources, commons).

The dearth of European words for the sophisticated concepts found in the languages of Indigenous Peoples is all the more reason that the understanding and practice of wilderness needs to evolve. As a starting place for this evolution, we must recognize that it is difficult, if not impossible, to untangle various aspects of a colonial culture that is overshadowed by land theft, racism, and genocide. That is not to say that wilderness and conservation cannot produce much needed and valuable outcomes. However, it is important to recognize that many protected areas (and in the case of North and South America, all protected areas) are situated on lands and territories originally occupied and stewarded by Indigenous Peoples. While there are increasing examples of successful and respectful conservation initiatives in many countries, far more are needed. Some of these initiatives are led or co-led by Indigenous Peoples and are oftentimes interim measures towards more fulsome sovereignty for Indigenous Nations and communities.

Most protected areas, including national parks and game reserves, are not wilderness, even if they are frequently and casually referred to as such. The casual/generic use of the term wilderness has often led to confusion, especially when we are considering formally designated Wilderness areas. Thus, those areas in which “recreation” takes precedence over the traditional practices of Indigenous Peoples as well as the needs of other lifeforms is a form of discrimination. While most of these areas are not actually wilderness, the casual use of the word contributes to its poor reputation in some quarters. In wilderness, much as in the worldview of Indigenous Peoples, the will of ecology is given primacy. The difference is that wilderness, in practice, remains a place apart from people, whereas in contrast Indigenous lifeways synthesize respectful human activity and the needs of the community with a harmonious and integrated co-existence with nature. Such synthesis, however, does not happen in absence of the sovereign constraints adopted by Indigenous Nations. One example of such constraints comes to us from the Toda People.

“Our landscape looks like a modern-day wilderness – it is, in fact, the core area of The Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve proclaimed in 1986, the first such in India – with occasional small groups of huts that signify habitation of Toda families and their temples. Although we are free to roam across this wilderness within our homeland and its immediate vicinity, our movements are restricted by constraints imposed by our Sacred Geography. Therefore, we know which hilltops are the abodes of deities and thus should not be defiled but used to purify us and all constituents; indeed, traditionally, even pointing out their direction was taboo. Similarly, as we traverse this harmonious wilderness we are aware which rocks are sacred, with prayer names, and thus not to be trod upon; which waterbodies are only to be used for the dairy-temples, and thus never to be touched by laypeople. We know the sanctified plant species that may only be used for priestly ordination and other aspects of sacred life, and not be handled for mundane purposes. Yes, there are specific Sacred Areas, and they exist within a Sacred Geography” (Chhabra 2015).

Many Indigenous Peoples, including the Toda People, interact with the lands, waters, and seas in different and familiar ways that are often unfamiliar to Western society and are actually indistinguishable from wilderness. This is due entirely to the symbiotic relationship Indigenous Peoples who practice traditional lifeways have with their environment. People in colonial European culture were unable to comprehend that such relationships were possible, a failure of imagination that contributes to the term wilderness referring to lands bereft (or seemingly so) of humans.

Human-centered models of decision-making over the land, water, and seas present specific challenges. However, in recent years, wilderness discourse has increasingly included Indigenous Peoples working in collaboration with conservation to protect their homelands and the biosphere. These collaborations result in growing recognition of the holistic models present in Indigenous knowledge and wisdom systems. From these discussions a new category of wilderness emerged which recognizes that sometimes Wilderness will be occupied by Indigenous Peoples practicing traditional lifeways. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) refers to this as a “Category 1B; Wilderness Protected Area.”

The IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), Wilderness Specialist Group (WSG), continues to shepherd this work and recognizes that the protection of Wilderness includes the presence and contribution of the nations, cultures, and communities who inhabit and care for these places. Rather than the mere presence of humans, the WSG emphasizes the degree and type of impact caused by human presence, and the application of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom within the networks of wildlife and natural processes.

We commend this effort conducted by the WSG within the IUCN WCPA and recognize it as an important step in a long process of building trust between knowledge and wisdom. They gain a more concrete understanding of the consequences that result from not adopting it more closely. IKWS apply within places, spaces and time, and to all who reside and pass through these areas. Indigenous science is inextricable from Indigenous law and therefore has much more authority to influence the way the societal participants behave than does Western science, a fundamental and important difference (and even point of conflict) that is essential to understand in any work of cultural reconciliation. In general, the colonial mindset does not easily and often grasp the ecological and social consequences of its strictly anthropocentric policies. Collectively (on the Western side), this is still not well-understood. Not understanding this illustrates one's bias and indicates we are not yet in an equitable dialogue.

Indigenous Nations call “protected areas” by their various languages and through the lens of the relationships that characterize these places. Rob Edward, Smelqmix elder, has described a process of traversing and awareness of the land by “marking your place on the journey by describing the relationships you have in that place.” Indigenous Peoples mark where they are through understanding the relationships of the place. Teaching this to “little brother,” “settlers,” “colonialists,” etc. is the responsibility of the local nations who know the relationships of the place. Local nations may call areas designed to preserve

these relationships Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, Sacred Places, Food Sovereignty Areas, and other terms relevant within their Traditional Territories. Drawing in and deepening non-Indigenous understanding of these concepts through the concept of wilderness creates a space of dialogue and understanding. Reg Crowshoe and Willy Ermine call this space an ‘Ethical Space,’ where two cultures are poised to engage with each other and deepen the collective understanding of the other, so we can create something new. We hope to create a new understanding of the word and concept of wilderness through this dialogue.

As we transition from a singular cultural reference point for wilderness we deepen our capacity to work together, restore sovereignty to Indigenous Nations, and protect Earth’s many lifeforms. Let us prioritize the development of “two-eyed seeing” (understanding through both traditional and contemporary lenses) to integrate Indigenous knowledge and wisdom at the center of wilderness so that we may better respect and defend the sovereign Nations who practice and apply this knowledge and live on a healthier planet upon which life thrives.

OUR CALL

For these reasons, we agree to undertake the following actions to help, expand, and indigenize the wilderness concept, so that all nations may benefit from a way to speak, in their own words, of a healthy relationship with the Earth. Most importantly, this Declaration recognizes both traditional Indigenous and Western sciences as critical informants of a more holistic philosophy and practice of wilderness conservation.

- 1.** Acknowledge that the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (especially Article 8(j)) is a necessary baseline and starting point for cross-cultural dialogue and for any actions that impact the sovereign territories of Indigenous Peoples. We commit to becoming consistent with existing international instruments recognizing the rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 2.** Include language and protocols for the implementation of responsibilities of and to all life, before establishing any development/protection plan or initiative, and throughout the process of developing a concept and/or designation for Wilderness or other formally protected area on land, water and sea.
- 3.** Practice Ethical Space/Two Eyed Seeing to create an expanded concept of wilderness, openly acknowledging that early applications of the wilderness concept reflected a worldview that is inconsistent with Indigenous Peoples.
- 4.** Prioritize assistance in advocacy, financial, and technical support to Indigenous Nations and communities who are struggling to defend their territories, food security, and/or biodiversity because of threats to their sovereignty.

- 5.** Actively promote a wilderness policy that acknowledges the multi-dimensional nature of the concept that transcends the material and physical realms. This action will both restore/ strengthen the broader meaning of ‘wilderness,’ and improve the likelihood that Indigenous Peoples can more effectively speak to and influence institutional land management strategies.
- 6.** Adopt language throughout Wilderness law and policy that honors the rights and roles of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in perpetuity.
- 7.** Hold accountable all international bodies, including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Wilderness Specialist Group (WCPA/IUCN), to accelerate efforts to expand and strengthen wilderness by acknowledging the necessity and value of applying Indigenous knowledge and wisdom.
- 8.** Elevate awareness of Wilderness Category 1B within institutions, organizations, governments, nations, and the public at all levels as an opportunity for protected area designation and management in the future and urge more comprehensive and far-reaching actions to initiate, integrate and support Indigenous management or co-management of designated Wilderness areas.
- 9.** Freely and openly acknowledge wilderness’ problematic history and frequent mal-appropriation, including genocide and land theft, and the opportunity and the need for it to evolve through the implementation of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom.
- 10.** Actively and publicly support and collaborate with Indigenous Peoples so that they can stay on their lands if they so wish, and empower them to defend their sovereignty, traditional lifeways, and the land, waters, and seas upon which they depend.
- 11.** Actively and publicly recognize that the science-based, international call for protecting 30% of land by 2030 (and 50x50) is necessary for the protection of biodiversity and can only be achieved by strengthening the sovereignty of and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples practicing wise stewardship of nature.
- 12.** Implement the best protocol for integrating Indigenous knowledge and wisdom as an equal partner with contemporary science (this would mean legal pluralism) to determine the best possible conservation management, goals, and methods; noting that Indigenous knowledge and wisdom always contains specific, place-based information, management wisdom, policy, and guidance.
- 13.** Ensure that networks of sacred natural sites and territories which have been sustained by Indigenous Peoples and others for ceremonial and pilgrimage purposes, and for the intrinsic value of the area(s), are recognized as an essential part of wilderness and/or as another relevant, distinct category of protected area. Ensure that the customary governance systems of the custodial communities are recognized and protected within these designations.

14. Actively support, whenever possible, Indigenous knowledge-based definitions, policies, practices, and solutions that prioritize the importance of “relationship,” interdependence, and harmony between humankind and nature.

15. Elevate awareness of Wilderness Category 1B within institutions (national governments, international governmental organizations, and NGOs) and within the public as a baseline for formal Wilderness definitions and management, while urging more comprehensive and far-reaching actions to facilitate stewardship of the land by Indigenous Peoples.

OUR ACCORD

We believe it is important that the concept of wilderness persists, and to do so, it needs to be expanded, deepened, and strengthened by Indigenous perspectives. Accomplishing this endeavor will take an active effort on the part of the conservation community because it bears the responsibility for promulgating an enhanced and improved understanding of what the wilderness concept can and should be.

We believe that wilderness is a place where all nations – people, animal, plant, and spirit – have the ability to experience freedom and exercise their agency and obligations within their relationships to all other life. We believe that wilderness is a place where all nations are interwoven into the ancient and sacred processes of life. We believe that wilderness is our true home, the place from whence we come and from which we draw sustenance. It is also the place to which we return so that we may live with, feel, and better understand our relationship with the world.

We believe, in the words of the Athabaskan-speaking Gwich'in People in the territories commonly known as Canada and Alaska, that wilderness is “the way the Creator intended it to be.”

REFERENCES

Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., and Marshall, A. (2012-11-01). "Two-eyed seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing". *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*. 2 (4): 331–340.

Casson, S.A., Martin V.G., Watson, A., Stringer, A., Kormos, C.F. (eds.). Locke, H., Ghosh, S., Carver, S., McDonald, T., Sloan, S.S., Mercurieff, I., Hendee, J., Dawson, C., Moore, S., Newsome, D., McCool, S., Semler, R., Martin, S., Dvorak, R., Armatas, C., Swain, R., Barr, B., Krause, D., Whittington-Evans, N., Gilbert, T., Hamilton, L., Holtrop, J., Tricker, J., Landres, P., Mejicano, Gilbert, T., Mackey, B., Aykroyd, T., Zimmerman, B., Thomas, J. (2016). *Wilderness Protected Areas: Management guidelines for IUCN Category 1b protected areas*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. x + 92pp.

Chhabra, T., (2015). *The Toda landscape: Explorations in cultural ecology*. Harvard Oriental Series, vol.79. HUP.

Crowshoe, R. *Voices of understanding: Looking through the window*. (2017). Alberta Energy Regulator.

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "wild (adj. & n.), Etymology," February 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9108687348>.

Vest, J. H. "Wilderness solitude: The sacred will-of-the-land" (1984). Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers. 5013.



RESOLUTION #2

Through the Eyes of Buffalo: A Strategic Platform to Restore All Natural World Relationships

PREAMBLE

The world faces an unprecedented trebled crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change, and social injustice, with over one million species on the brink of extinction. We recognize at the heart of this crisis lies a fundamental breakdown in our relationships with ourselves, each other, and the natural world. This resolution is based on the Through the Eyes of Buffalo Declaration, which illuminates the challenges we face and presents an opportunity for transformative change with a campaign and policy goals. By embracing and supporting Indigenous-led bison conservation, we can restore our relationship with nature and each other, drawing on the wisdom of the past, present forces, and a bold vision for a just and equitable future.

WHEREAS

Humanity finds itself at the center of interconnected crises—biodiversity, climate, and justice—which root in a crisis of relationship with ourselves, each other, and the planet. The extraordinary juncture we collectively find ourselves offers significant opportunities for transformational change to revitalize our relationship with nature and dissolve barriers dividing us from the natural world and each other.

Not long ago, an estimated 30-60 million bison lived in dynamic equilibrium with the land we now call North America. Due to extermination efforts enforced by non-Indigenous governments in the late 1800's, only an estimated 500 individual bison were left, creating a devastating impact on bison herds, the land they lived on, and the Indigenous communities they lived in reciprocity with.

As a result of repatriation efforts by Indigenous communities and governments across North America, more than half a million bison exist in North America today. However, more than 400,000 are in commercial herds. In contrast, only about 31,000 are in conservation herds managed by public agencies and environmental organizations and about 25,000 are in Tribal/Indigenous-managed herds.

Honoring Indigenous Peoples' relationship with the land since time immemorial and their knowledge, wisdom and science systems thus as stewards and guardians of keystone relatives and their homelands.

Indigenous-led conservation and regeneration are critical to meeting the challenges of biodiversity and climate crises and healing relational fault lines. Indigenized approaches are proven to be the best way forward for the land and all that it sustains. Eighty percent of the world's remaining biodiversity and nearly a quarter of above-ground carbon stores are on Indigenous lands. Restoring bison at meaningful ecological and cultural scales mandates a conservation paradigm recognizing buffalo as a cultural species and keystone relative—a species with extraordinary effects, both measurable and immeasurable, on the biocultural system in which it lives.

Co-creating a multi-dimensional, Indigenous-led conservation and repatriation strategy centering ecological and cultural restoration of bison at a continental scale can serve as a model for relational conservation and ecosystem regeneration. Returning Buffalo revitalizes Indigenous lifeways and the full suite of grassland biodiversity, from plants and insects to prairie dogs and large mammals, and large interconnected landscapes. Understanding the need to recognize, uplift, enforce and protect Indigenous rights as enunciated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and also to the universal need for humans to respect and act responsibly to each other and all life on Earth.

Buffalo can help us define and elevate an entirely new, Indigenous-led model to guide the next era of North American conservation. By framing conservation through a biocultural lens, we can co-create a paradigm suited to the complex, systemic challenges of the 21st century. A model that embodies concepts like relationship and reciprocity, respect and reconciliation, equity and justice. There is no better frame for this critical work than the biocultural restoration of bison, which lays the foundation for a durable conservation approach able to work effectively across the complex matrix of land ownership and rights that fragment the continent—private, public, Tribal/Nation, communal—and deliver large-scale, resilient outcomes that address the crises of our times, while healing and renewing the fractured relationship at the heart of these crises.

THEREFORE

The delegates to the 12th World Wilderness Congress (WILD12), convening in Hé Sapa. The Black Hills of the Oceti Sakowin Oyate, are hereby

RESOLVED

That, to achieve the goal of at least one million wild bison on 100 million acres by 2050 and to further expand their numbers and range during the last half of the Century, all relevant institutions, governments, and civil society in all sectors at all levels:

- 1. Design & Implement Strategies that Advance & Demonstrate Multi-Jurisdictional Partnerships for Bison Rematriation & Stewardship.**
- 2. Support the Indian Buffalo Management Act (IBMA).**
- 3. Sustain & Implement the United States Department of Interior's Commitment to the Bison Conservation Initiative (BCI).**
- 4. Engage in Strategic International & Transboundary Agreements & Collaborations to support continental-scale restoration of bison.**
- 5. Establish an Expanded Set of Protected Area Strategies & Designations that Help Define a More Equitable and Enduring Set of 30x30 Targets.**
- 6. Recognize & Incentivize Bison Restoration as a Nature Based Solution.**
- 7. Increase the Social Acceptance & Political Will Needed for Scaled Bison Restoration.**
- 8. Establish Durable Funding Mechanisms that Reflect the Ecological, Cultural & Social Value of Continental Buffalo Restoration.**
- 9. Develop a Strategy for Conservation through Reconciliation.**
- 10. Recognize the Inherent Responsibility of Indigenous Peoples to Steward Buffalo and Grasslands by Honoring Treaties and Enforcing Traditional Territorial Treaty Boundaries.**

PROPOSERS

Name: Tatewin Means

Position: Executive Director, Thunder Valley

Country: Hé Sapa

Email: tatewin@thundervalley.org

Name: Cristina Mormorunni//Issistsáakiiksi (Wolverine Woman) (Métis/Sardo)

Position: Co-Chair/Bison Working Group

Country: USA

Email: cristina@indigenoused.org

Name: Philimon Two Eagle

Title: Executive Director,
Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council

Country: Hé Sapa

Email: phil.twoeagle@rst-nsn.gov

SECONDERS

Name: Jason Baldes

Position: Executive Director, Wild River Tribal Buffalo Initiative

Country: USA

Email: upon request

Name: Raechel Wastesicoot

Position: Member, Bison Working Group

Country: Canada

Email: raechel.wastesicoot@gmail.com

Name: Curt Freese

Position: Member, Bison Working Group

Country: USA

Email: upon request

Name: Amy Lewis

Position: CEO, WILD.org

Country: USA

Email: amy@wild.org

Name: Adam Hanson

Position: Sr. Conservation Network Manager

Country: USA

Email: adam@wild.org



DECLARATION #2

Through the Eyes of Buffalo: A Strategic Platform to Restore All Natural World Relationships

PREAMBLE

The intent of this document is to amplify and elevate Indigenous knowledge, wisdom and science with the purpose to restore and rematriate wild, free-roaming, genetically healthy populations of bison and their historic ecological and cultural roles across their original North American range and heal the reciprocity between people and Mother Earth. A working group consisting of 15 members convened over six months to identify opportunities and obstacles related to these twin objectives and propose an ambitious and Indigenous-led approach to conservation and buffalo rematriation at a landscape scale. This agreement came together as a part of the lead up to the 12th World Wilderness Congress, which convened in Hé Sapa (the Black Hills) in August 2024, on the sacred and unceded territory of the Oceti Sakowin. We honor all Buffalo Nations' origin stories and relationships, with specific focus on teachings shared with us by the Oceti Sakowin, in particular that of the Great Race when people and buffalo came together in the Black Hills to establish a new order and sacred laws for just and right living.

THE CHALLENGE: The Trebled Crisis

The world is facing a biodiversity crisis that will have cascading impacts on every aspect of our lives. With more than one million species facing extinction^[1], biodiversity losses will have a ripple effect, impacting the ecological services people depend on, our economies, our diverse cultures, our health, and exacerbating climate change and social injustices globally. The world today is more at risk from social unrest and divides than it has ever been. The fault lines of politicized injustice, racism, and polarization are raw and exposed, and the biocultural^[2] systems that sustain life are unraveling. Humanity finds itself at the center of a trebled, interrelated crisis—biodiversity, climate, and justice—which is at its root a crisis of relationship with ourselves, each other, and the planet.

The extraordinary juncture at which we collectively find ourselves also offers significant opportunity to spark much needed transformational change and elevate collaboratively crafted novel approaches that revitalize the relationship with nature and dissolve the barriers and obstacles that divide us from the natural world and each other. These solutions require much more of us than just intellect, logic, or data. We need to remember what it is to live in reciprocity with our more-than-human relatives; remember what our tongues feel

like when they speak Buffalo,^[3] and regain fluency in the language of relationship: Respect. Reciprocity. Responsibility. Rematriation. Reconnection. Reconciliation.

Healing the planet calls for strategies that draw on the wisdom of the past, cognizant of the forces alive in the present, with a bold eye looking to a very different future. A future that breathes life into the principles of equity and justice, and charts a durable path to the restoration, revitalization, and stewardship of Turtle Island's^[4] rich natural and cultural heritage. Globally, there is increased recognition of how critical Indigenous-led conservation and Indigenous worldviews are to meeting the challenges of the biodiversity and climate crises and healing the relational fault lines at their root.

THE OPPORTUNITY: The Future of Effective & Enduring Conservation is Indigenous-Led

On Turtle Island, beginning with the launch of Idle No More Movement in 2012, and the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) protests in 2016, the power of Indigenous-led conservation has not only been acknowledged, but affected everything from national policies, the focus and flow of philanthropic dollars, and the theories of change actioned by many of the world's largest conservation organizations. Foundational to the rise of Indigeneity on the land and catalytic movements across the continent, is the decades of work that went into the development and ratification of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples^[5] (UNDRIP). Mexico ratified UNDRIP in 2007 as well as being a signatory to the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (ILO Convention 169); protections for Indigenous Peoples are articulated in its constitution. Canada launched a Truth & Reconciliation^[6] process in 2008 as a response to truth-telling around the devastating, intergenerational and residual impact of Indian Residential Schools on Indigenous lives, communities and ways of knowing. A final report was issued in 2015, outlining 94 recommendations for governments, institutions and organizations, one of which recognized conservation as a path to reconciliation. Canada became a signatory to UNDRIP in August 2016, while the United States was the last nation in the world to ratify it and made clear that its support was aspirational and not legally binding.

Not surprisingly, consensus is growing that successful restoration of the American bison, both plains and wood bison, at meaningful ecological and cultural scales mandates a different conservation paradigm, one that recognizes buffalo as a keystone relative—a species with extraordinary restorative ecological and cultural effects on the social and ecosystem in which it lives. With buffalo's return, Indigenous culture and ceremony are revitalized as is the full sweep of grassland biodiversity, from plants and insects to prairie dogs and large carnivores. To realize this cascade of ecological and cultural benefits, restoration efforts must draw on the full diversity of values, identities, and knowledge systems bison represent and embrace the tools that science, culture, law, economics, art, policy, and civic engagement offer. Further, this work must be fueled by collaboration that bridges boundaries, borders, and barriers of all types: political, cultural, economic, and psychological. Notably this work has been underway for nearly three decades on Native

lands. Co-creation of a multi-dimensional, Indigenous-led conservation^[7] strategy centered on the ecological and cultural restoration of bison at a continental scale can serve as a much-needed model for the future of North American and global conservation.

Not long ago, an estimated 30-60 million bison thundered across the land we now call North America. With them, they carried seeds and nutrients that replenished the land, sustaining vast networks of interconnected communities of life, and increasing primary productivity and biodiversity in their wake. Buffalo were the backbone of many Nations' food security, the center of circular, sustainable economies, and defined ceremony, cultural practice, and spiritual life across the continent. For a growing number of rural communities, the bison is recognized for having formed the rich grasslands that sustain the ranching industry. It is also important to note that the bison ranching economy is growing at a significant and sustained rate. Culturally, buffalo contribute to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community and national identities. For example, the buffalo is recognized as a symbol of national identity as the National Mammal of the United States, a representation of "Unity, Resilience & Health."

Despite bison's tremendous cultural, ecological, and economic value, a calculated extermination campaign nearly extinguished its populations in less than a century. And by the late 1800s, less than 500 individual bison were left in its ferocious wake. Today, it is almost impossible to imagine, let alone feel, millions of hooves drumming in our stomach; smell churned earth and musky beast rising on hot prairie air; see the vast ocean of animals that fed us, clothed us, sustained a continental trade and economies, inspired the ceremonies, prayers, and art that defined our very identities and cultures. Brave visionaries are responsible for the recovery of the small, but growing, herds sprinkled across the landscape today. But neither humanity nor wild nature have recovered from the ravaging loss of this epic spirit who once nourished our bodies, hearts, and spirits. Although nearly half a million bison exist in North America today, more than 400,000 are in commercial herds. In contrast, only about 31,000 are in conservation herds managed by public agencies and environmental organizations and about 25,000 are in tribal herds. Among the conservation and tribal herds, fewer than 20,000 bison are considered free ranging.^[8] The combined conservation and tribal bison populations constitute roughly 0.2% of the continent's historic population and, we estimate, occupy less than 0.2 % of their historic range. The American bison is ecologically extinct across nearly the entirety of their former range and nowhere on the continent do bison express the full range of ecological, cultural, economic, or social values they once did^[9].

Clearly, we need to move towards Indigenous-led conservation models that do more than prevent a species extinction or designate a Protected Area. While these conservation solutions were once fundamental in providing respite and recovery for bison herds, they are no longer bold enough to meet today's opportunities and challenges. Bison, and the Indigenous communities they have lived in reciprocity with since time immemorial, can help us define and lead the way to develop enhanced models to influence the next era of landscape conservation across North America. By framing conservation through an Indigenous biocultural lens, we can co-create a paradigm suited to the complex, systemic

challenges of the 21st century. A model that embodies concepts like relationship and reciprocity, respect and reconciliation, equity and justice. There is no better frame for this critical work than the biocultural restoration of bison, which lays the foundation for a durable conservation approach able to work effectively across the complex matrix of land ownership and rights that fragment the continent—private, public, Tribal, Nation, communal—and deliver large-scale, resilient outcomes that address the crises of our times, while healing and renewing the fractured relationship at the heart of these crises.

Bison conservation is directly connected to our ability to protect and restore some of the most threatened, carbon-rich ecosystems in North America: grasslands. Grasslands store about a third of the global terrestrial carbon stocks, provide protection from flooding and drought, and help purify our water. They are also one of the most threatened and least protected biomes in North America.

Further, as keystone relatives, bison deliver a cascade of biocultural benefits for myriad communities and Nations, species and ecosystems, while providing powerful natural climate solutions. Buffalo creates a commanding platform for the elevation and emergence of Indigenous-led conservation initiatives that have the potential to advance conservation at ecological and culturally significant scales. The emergence of stewardship and guardian programs can reconnect Indigenous youth and communities to their homelands, cultural rights and responsibilities, their traditional teachings and more-than-human relatives. With dedicated attention, buffalo can bring urban and rural, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, communities together and restore a respect and understanding for rural life and greater appreciation for the rich cultural diversity that is undoubtedly one of Turtle Island's greatest strengths and sources of resilience in the face of change.

Finally, Indigenous-led buffalo repatriation and restoration presents a clear and much-needed path to reconciliation through the conservation of biodiversity. Bison restoration encourages us to think more expansively about our relationship with the Earth and each other. Buffalo require large, healthy spaces, and the only time in history these spaces have existed on a scale to support 30-60 million buffalo was when Indigenous Peoples stewarded the land. It is clear that the restoration of the prairies and buffalo should be Indigenous-led and go hand-in-hand with investment in Indigenous/Indigenizing conservation models, organizations, and governing institutions at regional and national scales. On June 4, 2024, a rare white buffalo was born in Yellowstone National Park, and was named "Wakan Gli," or "Sacred Return" in Lakota. The birth of this rare white buffalo has come at an important time when modern governments, Indigenous groups, NGO's, private landowners, and other institutions and individuals interested in bison conservation must work together to understand, converse and implement a more holistic form of managing bison for our collective futures.

Overarching Campaign & Policy Goals

Recognize and support the inherent ability and responsibility of Indigenous Peoples to steward our more-than-human relatives and their homelands:

- 1.** Indigenized approaches are proven and need to be reflected in policy and funding streams: 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity and nearly a quarter of above-ground carbon stores are on Indigenous lands [10].
- 2.** Indigenous Peoples have been in relationship with the land since time immemorial and thus, are the enduring stewards and guardians of keystone relatives and their homelands. The future of conservation needs to be Indigenous-led.
- 3.** Indigenous Peoples will reclaim the responsibility of seven generation planning for our more-than-human-relatives and their homelands. A vision for the seven-generation horizon for our bison relatives will be created.

Rematriate wild, free-roaming, genetically healthy populations of bison and their historic ecological and cultural roles across their original North American range. Based on the ability of bison to readily double their population every five years, the collective Tribal/Nation, public and NGO bison population of roughly 56,000 could potentially grow to nearly one million wood and plains bison within 20 years. To make room for one million wild bison and other wildlife with which they share the land, at least 100 million acres of bison habitat are needed. Recognizing the challenges of assembling the land and coordinating the efforts among diverse bison managers, we propose a goal of at least one million wild, free-roaming bison inhabiting at least 100 million acres by 2050. Longer term, we propose a population of several million wild bison be restored to their historic range in North America. Realizing this goal will:

- 4.** Restore and conserve grasslands and their rich biocultural diversity.
- 5.** Reverse the accelerating rate of biodiversity loss and contribute to the Convention on Biological Diversity's goal of conserving 30% of lands and water by 2030 (and half, the science-based target).
- 6.** Foster co-stewardship of biodiversity, including bison, across large, multi-jurisdictional landscapes.
- 7.** Create a path for respect, reconciliation, justice, and equity through Indigenous and community-led conservation initiatives.
- 8.** Launch a multi-faceted continental-scale conservation strategy that provides systemic solutions to the global biodiversity, climate, and social justice crises in partnership with First Nations, Tribes, NGOs, citizens, agencies, and all levels of government in Mexico, Canada and the United States.

9. Advance a trilateral “culturally important species” designation for buffalo that calls on Federal, State, Provincial and Municipal governments to work with Indigenous Nations and organizations to integrate cultural, ceremonial and cosmological considerations into repatriation and restoration plans for our more-than human relatives.
10. Elevate and amplify youth voices and engagement in buffalo restoration through investment in the design and development of a variety of youth initiatives, i.e., cultural camps, land-based trainings, and programs that support intergenerational mentorship and learning, etc.
11. Prepare for buffalo and land repatriation by supporting and investing in Indigenous communities and Nations remembering and renewing relationship with buffalo and buffalo culture.

Core Campaign & Policy Objectives

- 1. Design and Implement Strategies that Advance and Demonstrate Multi-Jurisdictional Partnerships for Bison Repatriation and Stewardship:** Successful buffalo restoration efforts need to occur at scale, ideally a regional and/or continental scale. We envision the expansion of public land acreage dedicated to bison/biodiversity restoration and conservation to at least 100 million acres by 2050. This is a vision critical to turning the biodiversity and climate crisis around and the requisite work across multi-jurisdictional landscapes will require the deepening and development of strategic partnerships between Indigenous leaders, Tribal & First Nations governments, national, state/provincial and local officials, agencies, private landowners, community organizations, and NGOs.
- 2. Support the Indian Buffalo Management Act (IBMA):** Ensure broad awareness and support of the IBMA and the levels of funding needed to support Indigenous-led buffalo repatriation and stewardship efforts in the United States. Elevate this legislation at a continental scale as a model to guide parallel policy efforts in Canada and Mexico, along with policy-making that recognizes bison as wildlife as opposed to livestock.
- 3. Sustain & Implement the United States Department of Interior’s Commitment to the Bison Conservation Initiative (BCI):** Ensure ongoing policy support at the Secretarial and Bureau leadership levels, necessary levels of funding, and timely implementation of the Bison Conservation Initiative over the next 10 years in collaboration with Indigenous, NGO & ranching partners. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding or other interagency agreement(s) between DOI and key U.S. Department of Agriculture agencies (e.g., the U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Rural Development and others), including efforts to coordinate science, policy, funding, and management across agencies, and expand the public lands footprint on which bison are permitted to freely roam.

4. Engage in Strategic International & Transboundary Agreements & Collaborations:

Establish a transboundary collaboration with Canada & Mexico around parallel national BCIs; work to establish Mexico-Canada-U.S. partnerships to foster continental scale meta-population management; engage in policy arenas like the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Migratory Species, Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, etc.

5. Establish an Expanded Set of Protected Area Strategies & Designations that Help Define a More Equitable and Enduring Set of 30x30 Targets:

Develop policy and funding mechanisms that support the emergence of multi-jurisdictional bison restoration and conservation strategies; increase Indigenous and community-led conservation initiatives; incentivize private land stewardship and support the conservation value of working lands. We envision multi-million-acre protected areas, linked continentally through biocultural corridors, sustained and stewarded by Indigenous and local communities, public agencies, NGOs, and others as appropriate.

6. Recognize & Incentivize Bison Restoration as a Natural Climate Solution: Invest in the research needed to establish the enabling conditions and best practices that maximize bison's contribution to soil carbon, grassland rewilding, riparian restoration, and the climate resiliency of vital North American landscapes and waterways.

7. Increase the Social Acceptance & Political Will Needed for Scaled Bison Restoration:

Support the scientific research and story-based strategy needed to grow, diversify, and connect the constituency for bison conservation, overcome oppositional narratives, and catalyze the social embrace/license and political will needed to restore buffalo at a regional and ultimately continental scale.

8. Establish Durable Funding Mechanisms that Reflect the Ecological, Cultural & Social Value of Continental Buffalo Restoration:

Successful continental bison restoration will bring enumerable social benefits and positive externalities. Realizing the vision will require a level of investment that matches this potential return. We call for a \$2 billion annual investment in a Buffalo Nations Fund that supports land acquisition for repatriation and public land expansion (objective 1) dedicated to bison conservation and the development of large Indigenous and public protected areas, establishment of conservation easements, core guardian/stewardship capacities and infrastructure needs vital to conservation of bison and other grassland wildlife. In addition to the Buffalo Nations Fund, bison recovery and stewardship incentives should be integrated into existing and future Farm Bill programs, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund should be Indigenous in recognition of the critical role Indigenous Nations play in effective and enduring conservation. Perverse incentives, e.g., crop subsidies, that negatively impact people and the planet should be identified and redirected to the Buffalo Nations Fund and efforts to restore bison and protect grassland biodiversity.

9. Develop a Strategy for Conservation through Reconciliation: Establish a platform that bridges, incentivizes, and actions bodies of work that link buffalo conservation with reconciliation and reparation processes for Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities, resulting in land rematriation and an increase in Indigenous-led conservation initiatives that can guide indigenization of conservation in North America and help redress our looming biodiversity and climate crises.

10. Recognize the Inherent Responsibility of Indigenous Peoples to Steward Buffalo and Grasslands by Honoring Treaties and Enforcing Traditional Territorial Treaty Boundaries:

The total area of all reservations held in trust by the United States government is approximately 2.3% of the surface area of the country (56 million acres). When we add to this treaty lands (the Oceti Sakowin’s 1851 and 1868 agreements with the government of the United States include nearly 60 million acres of land, and this is just one tribe), the potential to meet 30x30 targets through the combination of Indigenous-led efforts and the honoring of treaty obligations potentially multiplies ten-fold.

[1] In 2019, the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) warned that our impact on the Earth is “unprecedented in human history.” Our home planet is fast approaching an irreversible tipping point, a point where nature can no longer heal herself and life as we know it is untenable. According to the research, one million known species will disappear by 2050 unless radical measures are taken. More than 500,000 species are in effect “dead species walking”: not yet extinct, but with no chance of survival because of the expanding human footprint. Wild mammal biomass has plummeted by 82%; humans and farm animals now make up 96% of all mammalian biomass on Earth.

[2] The field of biocultural conservation is grounded in the reality that diversity in nature (biodiversity) and diversity in culture (cultural and linguistic diversity) are interconnected and interdependent facets of the diversity of life. Biocultural conservation thus adopts integrative strategies that do not separate work to sustain the vitality of nature from efforts to sustain the vitality of the world’s Indigenous cultures and languages.

[3] This document switches back and forth between ‘bison’ and ‘buffalo’ intentionally; bison the scientific term, buffalo a cultural one: a word signifying kinship, a relation.

[4] Many Native people refer to the continent of North America as Turtle Island, a term that emerges from Indigenous creation stories that tell of a turtle that holds the world on its back. Referring to the continent as Turtle Island begins to shift the conceptualization of North America from an exclusively colonial perspective.

[5] https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

[6] <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1450124405592/1529106060525>

[7] Indigenous-led conservation entails leveraging the enduring connections that Indigenous communities have nurtured with landscapes and wildlife as a source of guidance amid the imminent challenges posed by the biodiversity and climate crisis. Drawing upon the intricate tapestry of Indigenous cultures, societies,

economies, and scientific knowledge, this approach advocates a holistic approach to conservation. It is rooted in the weaving of multidimensional alliances, the wisdom accumulated over millennia through observational data, and a reciprocal bond with the natural environment. This conservation paradigm is fundamentally grounded in principles of abundance and stewardship. The five main pillars of Indigenous-led conservation are: 1. Place-based knowledge. 2. A value system of relationship – constantly thinking about how things relate and influence each other. 3. Requiring people to be a part of, instead of separate from, the natural world. 4. Longstanding generational knowledge. 5. Integrated into cultural practices (i.e. language, ceremony, food systems, etc.)

American novelist Thomas Pynchon wrote, “If they can get you asking the wrong questions they don’t need to worry about the answers.” Arguably, Western conservation has been asking the wrong questions. An error that increasingly is leaning to fatal, as the collective forgets what our Indigenous ancestors knew and lived, and what our Knowledge Keepers are desperately trying to remind us about Natural Law and indigenous systems of governance, about the relationship and responsibilities we have to the Earth. And most importantly, about how we can live and act in ways that honor this sacred relationship that is vital to life and our collective physical, material, and spiritual well-being.

[8] Aune, K., D. Jorgensen, & C.C. Gates. 2017. Bison bison. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2017: e.T2815A45156541. <https://www.fws.gov/species/plains-bison-bison-bison-bison>

[9] Sanderson, E.W., K.H. Redford, B. Weber, K. Aune, D. Baldes, J. Berger, D. Carter, C. Curtain, J. Derr, S. Dobrott, E. Fearn, C. Fleener, S. Forrest, C. Gerlach, C.C. Gates, J.E. Gross, P. Gogan, S. Grassel, J.A. Hilty, M. Jensen, K. Kunkel, D. Lammers, R. List, K. Minkowski, T. Olson, C. Pague, P.B. Robertson, and B. Stephenson. 2008. The ecological future of the North American bison: conceiving long-term, large-scale conservation of wildlife. *Conservation Biology*. 22:252–266.

[10] <https://soe.dcceew.gov.au>

“Transformational change starts with transformational ways of knowing. We must place Indigenous leadership at the center of conservation because they remember lifeways that we have lost.”

Amy Lewis,

WILD I2 Executive Organizer
and Wild Foundation CEO



RESOLUTION #3

Advancing the Rights of Antarctica

WHEREAS

The 7th World Wilderness Congress (2001) adopted a Resolution, proposed by the late Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Professor Wangari Maathai, stating that delegates should “develop a jurisprudence that recognizes humans as inseparable from the planetary ecosystem.”

Delegates at the 10th World Wilderness Congress (2013) resolved to “support the worldwide recognition of the inherent rights of Nature to exist, thrive and evolve,” and to “actively advance Nature Rights in law and practice,” including through delegates’ own work.

Implementation of this approach has continued to accelerate worldwide, and in 2019 the United Nations Secretary General stated that: “Over the last decade, Earth jurisprudence can be seen as the fastest growing legal movement of the twenty-first century.” Currently, Nature’s rights are recognized in constitutions, treaties, national and municipal legislation, and/or court decisions in at least 24 nations.^[1]

The continent of Antarctica and the surrounding Southern Ocean covers ten percent of the surface of Earth, and plays a vital role in maintaining the climate and other conditions which enable life across the planet to flourish. This magnificent, vast wilderness now faces grave threats: climate change is melting the ice and rapidly degrading Antarctic ecosystems on land and in the sea, and increased fishing, tourism, and fossil fuel exploration pose significant and growing risks. Scientists report that Antarctic glaciers are rapidly melting, sea ice is at record lows, ocean currents are weakening, and temperatures of 40°C above average have been recorded.

Antarctica is unique in geopolitical terms: it is not within, or subject to, the sovereignty of, any State. Since 1959, the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) has reserved Antarctica for peaceful purposes, particularly scientific collaboration, and has prohibited mining and militarization. However the ATS alone cannot meet the intensifying threats to Antarctica, nor enable Antarctica to be represented in decision-making processes that affect it.

In response, a growing number of scientists, Indigenous representatives, conservationists, and others are calling for transformative change. This includes the recognition of Antarctica as an autonomous, sovereign, self-regulating entity, for humans to respect and uphold the inherent rights and freedoms of Antarctica and all Antarctic beings, and for decisions that affect Antarctica to be based on what is best for Antarctica.

THEREFORE

The 12th World Wilderness Congress reaffirms the support expressed by the 7th and 10th Congresses for advancing the recognition of Nature’s rights, and recognizes: first, that Antarctica is a community of interdependent Antarctic beings that plays a vital and indispensable role in maintaining conditions conducive to the flourishing of life on Earth; second, that all people have a duty to safeguard the inherent rights and freedoms of Antarctic beings to exist, to be wild and continue their regenerative cycles and processes free of human disruption or control, and to play their unique roles in the larger Earth community.

RESOLVED

Delegates at this Congress will support the establishment of a global alliance to advocate for the recognition of the rights of Antarctica and all Antarctic beings, and will advance rights of Antarctica in relevant international forums, current or to be developed, to ensure that those rights are protected and that decisions that affect Antarctica are made in the best interests of Antarctica.

PROPOSER

Name: Cormac Cullinan
Position/title: Executive Director, Wild Law Institute
Country: South Africa
Email: Cormac@greencounsel.co.za

Name: Dr Priscilla Wehi
Position/Title: Centre for Sustainability, University of Otago, and Director, Te Pūnaha Matatini National Centre of Research Excellence in Complex Systems
Country: New Zealand
Email: priscilla.wehi@otago.ac.nz

SECONDDERS

Name: Andrew Muir
Position/title: CEO, Wilderness Foundation Africa
Country: South Africa
Email: andrew@wfa.africa

Name: Linda Sheehan
Position/title: Executive Director, Environment Now
Country: USA
Email: lsheehan@environmentnow.org

Name: Danii Kehler
Position/title: Indigenous Artist & Consultant, Office of the Treaty Commissioner
Country: Canada
Email: daniikehler@gmail.com

[1] See <https://ecojurisprudence.org/> and <http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/rightsOfNature/>.



RESOLUTION #4

Mainstreaming Mentorship of Young Conservationists

PREAMBLE:

At CoalitionWILD, we envision a world where young conservationists are confident, respectful, respected, included, and well-supported as active leaders and agents of change. Over our ten-year history, we have supported nearly two hundred young conservation leaders by connecting them with relevant senior conservation professionals, helping them amplify their personal networks, access up-to-date knowledge on conservation sector trends, and gain lifelong supporters and cheerleaders.

In recent years, we have seen a striking increase in interest from young conservation leaders seeking mentorship, receiving more than six hundred applications per year for our Global Mentorship Program. Unfortunately, this surge in interest has not been matched by a corresponding increase in participation from mid and senior generations. This trend is not unique to our program but is also evident in other mentorship programs in the conservation sector with which we have had discussions.

WHEREAS:

To ensure the long-term sustainability of conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of nature efforts, we must invest in supporting the younger generations of conservationists who will be entering the workforce, advocating for conservation policies, and actively participating in conservation movements in the coming decades. We recognize that mentorship, understood as: *“a long-term, trust-based, horizontal relationship between two or more people that provides a space for two-way knowledge, ideas, and experience exchange, and reciprocal learning, empowering young people to exercise their agency, fostering their ability to lead and innovate,”* is a critical strategy to enhance the effectiveness and maintain the legacy of conservation efforts in the long run.

We recognize the importance of youth in addressing our biodiversity and climate crises, and mentorship provides youth with the knowledge and understanding of generational planning. Through the mentorship of young conservationists, senior professionals facilitate effective knowledge transfer, ensuring that their valuable expertise and insights are passed on to the next generation. This process not only helps maintain the continuity and integrity of their work but also secures their legacy within the field.

We believe that promoting cross-generational interactions contributes to ensuring the intergenerational equity of conservation efforts, a key guiding consideration for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. We will only be able to “*meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” if we establish conversations with younger generations about what their needs are and provide them with the capacity to develop strategies to meet them. We will only be able “*to ensure the meaningful participation of younger generations in decision-making processes at all levels*” if conservation organizations actively promote these dialogues.

THEREFORE

We urge nonprofit organizations and the private sector, all working to restore, protect, and conserve our planet, to undertake the following actions:

RESOLVED

1. To include mentorship of younger generations as a part of their internal strategy. Mentorship can be implemented within their organization, with their partner organizations, or externally (**Mentorship strategic integration**).
2. To allocate at least 20 hours per year for each staff member to mentor young conservation professionals. This commitment should be reflected in their job description and responsibilities (**Staff mentorship commitment**).
3. To encourage retired employees to contribute their experience, knowledge, and time to mentorship efforts, ensuring that valuable conservation knowledge is passed on to younger generations (**Engagement of retirees**).
4. To collaborate with organizations that already have successful mentorship programs or are experts in training for effective mentorship relationships. Ensuring their staff receive at least 10 hours of mentorship training per year to become more effective mentors (**Collaboration and training**).

PROPOSERS

Name: Rowely “Yen” Parico

Position/Title: Director, CoalitionWILD

Country: Belgium/Philippines

Email: yen@coalitionwild.org

Name: Fátima Gigante

Position/Title: Program Coordinator, CoalitionWILD

Country: Spain/Portugal

Email: fatima@coalitionwild.org

SECONDERS

Name: Michael Grover

Position/Title: Nature Positive Enterprise Manager,
Conserve Global

Country: South Africa

Email: Mike.Grover@conserveglobal.org

Name: Crista Valentino

Position/Title: Executive Director, Jackson Hole Travel
and Tourism Board

Tribal Partnerships Program Manager, National
Wildlife Federation

Socio-economic Advancement Specialist, Current
Consulting

Country: USA

Email: crista.valentino@gmail.com

“There is no accident that we’re here on Mother Earth at this particular point in time. We all have a purpose, we need each other. By healing yourself, you begin to heal everything else because everything is about relationship.”

Harion Kuuyux MercuiliEFF,

Unangan elder

WHEREAS

Recognizing the shortcomings of anthropocentric legal frameworks, which largely treat Nature or Mother Earth as a mere commodity or resource, and which fail to recognize the unique wants, needs, and voices of life on Earth aside from its value to humans; and

Building on the foundations laid by the 7th World Wilderness Congress (2001), which called for the development of a jurisprudence recognizing humans as inseparable from the planetary ecosystem, and the 10th World Wilderness Congress (2013), which supported the worldwide recognition of the inherent rights of Nature; and

Applauding the growing number of legal guardianship bodies that serve as the human face and voice of Nature, such as Te Pou Tupua, the legal guardianship body for the Whanganui River in Aoteroa New Zealand, along with legal guardianship bodies fulfilling the legal rights of the Atrato River in Colombia, Mar Menor saltwater lagoon in Spain, and Marañón River in Peru (in development), amongst others; and

Noting that Nature's voice is also being elevated in law and society through other innovations, including the establishment of a Mother Earth Ombudsman (Defensoría de la Madre Tierra) in Bolivia and by giving Nature a formal voice in governance, including within government and both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations; and

Understanding that humans cannot fully represent the entirety of Nature's diverse interests, yet despite this limitation, it is imperative to strive to provide a voice for more-than-human life in our legal and governance systems; and

Highlighting the critical role of Nature's traditional guardians since time immemorial, namely Indigenous stewards who, based on their inherent relationships with and responsibilities to sacred lands, waters, and sky, have traditionally protected and safeguarded Mother Earth and all life within;

THEREFORE

The 12th World Wilderness Congress emphasizes the importance of guardianship models and speaking for, with, and as Nature along with other ways to empower and protect the voice, interests, and rights of Mother Earth.

RESOLVED

1. To recognize the importance of guardianship models to provide formal representation for Nature within the legal system, better ensuring protection.
2. To recognize the importance of providing formal agency for Nature within governance mechanisms via human proxy models.
3. To support the empowerment and rights of Indigenous Peoples to serve as guardians of their sacred territories, recognizing their traditional knowledge and practices as vital to protect and restore Mother Earth.
4. To highlight and support other forms of governance where Nature's voice is represented through human proxies or guardians, amongst other mechanisms.
5. To promote the adoption and implementation of laws and policies that grant legal rights to and guardianship of Nature, in addition to promoting jurisprudence based on the Inherent Relationships between Indigenous Peoples and their connected lands and waters and other non-rights-based inherent responsibility pathways.
6. To encourage all delegates and member organizations to acknowledge, respect, and empower the many voices of Nature within their own work, fostering a global movement to give Nature agency within the legal system and society.

PROPOSER

Name: Grant Wilson

Position/title: Earth Law Center

Country: USA

Email: gwilson@earthlaw.org

SECONDDERS

Name: Britt Gondolfi

Position/title: Rights of Nature Project Coordinator

Country: USA

Email: britt@bioneers.org

WHEREAS

There is no question about the ecological importance that the ocean provides not only for humankind, but for the entire Earth. Historically, the ocean has been falsely viewed as a vast and inexhaustible resource. Known as the tragedy of the commons, international waters have facilitated widespread, unregulated ecological exploitation and habitat loss. Despite targets to preserve the ocean, such as the UN's goal to protect 10% of the ocean by 2020, global governments continue to fall short. Nearly halfway through the new decade, only around 8% of our oceans are protected. Meanwhile, the ambitious target of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030 (30x30) looms just a few years away. The 30x30 goal is a critical step towards the broader vision of protecting 50% of the planet by 2030. Nature Needs Half in order to adequately address the biodiversity and climate crises.

Conservation priorities can be loosely divided into a two-pronged approach. The first, and most common, strategy is to protect and restore hotspot areas. These are regions of high biodiversity and endemism that face significant human threats. The second approach focuses on proactive wilderness protection, which is a less resource-intensive method aimed at safeguarding ecosystems that are still intact with minimal human disturbances. This dual strategy ensures the preservation of both highly threatened biodiversity hotspots and relatively undisturbed wilderness areas.

While terrestrial wilderness has guided conservation priorities since Dr. Russell Mittermeier defined and mapped it in 1988, marine wilderness has been relatively neglected. It was not until 2018 that Dr. Kendall Jones and his team defined and mapped marine wilderness, identifying areas most devoid of intense human impact. The study revealed that only 13.2% (55 million km²) of the world's oceans still qualify as marine wilderness, primarily located in the high seas of the polar regions and the southern hemisphere. To date, marine conservation strategies have generally targeted hotspots within Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), leaving most marine wilderness unprotected in the high seas.

With only 8% of the world's oceans protected, securing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) has proven to be a complex task involving challenges in politics, funding, and enforcement. A major roadblock for MPA implementation has been the lack of jurisdiction in the high seas, which cover 64% of our oceans. Currently, the only MPAs in international waters are around Antarctica. In September 2023, the United Nations signed the High Seas Treaty, potentially one of the

largest conservation victories to date. However, for it to enter into force, 60 countries need to ratify it by June 2025. As of July 2024, 8 countries have ratified and 91 have signed. If ratified, the High Seas Treaty would provide the legal framework needed to implement MPAs in international waters.

THEREFORE

In order to achieve the 30x30 conservation target, ratifying the High Seas Treaty before June 2025 is essential. Pressure must be placed on government officials in countries that have signed but not yet ratified the treaty. This legal framework would enable the establishment of MPAs in international waters, allowing for a more versatile approach to marine conservation. The High Seas Treaty could facilitate the inclusion of preventative marine wilderness protection alongside hotspot protection in conservation priorities. This dual strategy is crucial for preserving biodiversity and maintaining large-scale ecological and evolutionary processes. Protecting marine wilderness would require minimal resources, serve as a preventive measure against human impacts, and advance progress toward the 30x30 goal.

RESOLVED

1. Call upon the countries of the world to ratify the High Seas Treaty before June 2025.
2. Increase awareness about the High Seas Treaty to build public support and pressure governments to act.
3. Call for targets to preserve marine wilderness in global conservation strategies.
4. Encourage further research on marine wilderness, including enhancing the resolution of wilderness area mapping, reaching a scientific consensus on marine wilderness criteria and definitions, and possible identification of additional marine wilderness areas.

PROPOSERS

Name: Cristina Mittermeier
Position/title: Co-founder, SeaLegacy
Country: Canada
Email: cristina@sealegacy.org

Name: Jamie Goncalves
Position/title: Researcher/Writer, Cristina Mittermeier Photography
Country: Canada
Email: jamie@mitty.art

Name: Maximiliano Bello
Position/title: Advisor/Global Ocean Policy, Mission Blue
Country: Chile, United States
Email: bello.max.m@gmail.com

Name: Adam Hanson
Position/title: Sr. Conservation Network Manager, WILD.org
Country: USA
Email: adam@wild.org

SECONDDERS

Name: Sylvia Earle
Position/title: Founder, Mission Blue
Country: United States



RESOLUTION #7

Making Space to Protect White Animals, Messengers of Peace

WHEREAS:

White animals play an irreplaceable role in the cultural practices of traditional peoples. These animals, which are often viewed as “messengers of peace” help to restore pride and relevancy in ancient lifeways while simultaneously heightening interest in traditional ways of knowing. In many cultures, when people learn of the birth or appearance of a white animal, such as the recent birth of the exceedingly rare white buffalo in Yellowstone National Park, they are reminded of the prophecies of their ancestors and are often inspired to come closer to the practices through which such prophecies were derived. Thus, white animals can play a role in slowing assimilation’s corrosive poison of forgetfulness.

The sudden, unexpected appearance of a white animal - within a community's awareness or an individual's line of sight - fills many with a sense of hope and a connection to a purer, more expansive, and more subtle reality, be that the intangible principles of goodness and peace or a stronger recognition of the collective unconscious and the Otherworld. They guide the attention of native and non-native peoples alike toward the sacred and a recognition that existence is more than just physical bodies moving through physical space. They remind us of the omnipresence of spirit. They remind us that Earth is sacred.

White animals have a track record of uniting us, across cultures, in worthwhile endeavors. It was the protection of the Southern White Rhino, which in the 1950s was on the brink of extinction, that brought the founders of the World Wilderness Congress together (a white South African game ranger and his Zulu mentor) during the violent racism of Apartheid to unify their efforts for the protection of this species. It is the June 2024 birth of the white buffalo in Yellowstone that precedes the cross-cultural communion of the 12th World Wilderness Congress (WILD12) that will convene in the Hé Sapa, the Black Hills, in August of the same year.

Like all lifeforms, white animals need a space to live, grow, and nourish themselves. While their appearance is oftentimes rare, these appearances will become even more scarce if we continue to degrade the lands, waters, and seas upon which they depend. This weakens our connection to the sacred. When we make space for life, we make space for white animals. When we make space for white animals, we make space for the sacred. In the view of many Indigenous Peoples, the logic is self-evident.

Recent governmental calls to protect 30% of Earth’s lands, waters, and seas by 2030 (30x30), while important, do not go far enough for Indigenous Peoples who view all of Earth as sacred and who recognize that intact places that many call “wild” help to increase the likelihood that we might encounter and be inspired by white animals and that they might aid us in drawing closer to Spirit. Western scientists have called to protect a minimum of Half of Earth’s lands, waters, and seas – while this is still not enough (all of Earth is sacred, not just Half), it is a step closer to what is needed.

THEREFORE

Due to the fact that Western science and conservation does not fully recognize or understand white animals for what they are, Indigenous leadership and stewardship of the lands, waters, and seas must play a prominent role in the global endeavor to ensure that nature has sufficient space to thrive. The 30x30/Half objective must include the restoration of Indigenous territories to Indigenous Peoples who will unite Western science and traditional knowledge and wisdom to protect the physical spaces that help manifest white animals into the world and who will in turn heighten the sacred significance of our lives.

RESOLVED

1. Call upon conservation non-governmental organizations, national and provincial land management agencies, and Indigenous leaders to publicly recognize the sacredness of all of Earth, including and especially white animals.
2. Increase awareness about the role of white animals in reminding us of the importance of and our connection to intangible and spiritual dimensions.
3. Increase the amount of lands, waters, and seas that are wild, healthy, and intact to at least Half of the surface of the Earth, and in doing so requiring the free, prior, and informed consent of all Indigenous Peoples and local communities who occupy those areas, and including in this objective the return and restoration of territory to Indigenous communities for the purpose of stewarding Earth in accordance with traditional knowledge and wisdom.
4. Encourage further public dialogue on the sacred and the role white animals play as messengers of peace.

PROPOSERS

Name: Chief Arvol Looking Horse
Title: 19th Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe
Country: Hé Sapa

Name: Philimon Two Eagle
Title: Executive Director,
Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council
Country: Hé Sapa
Email: phil.twoeagle@rst-nsn.gov

SECONDER

Name: Amy Lewis
Position: CEO, WILD.org
Country: USA
Email: amy@wild.org



RESOLUTION #8

Empowering Ecological Outcomes by Honoring Treaties

WHEREAS:

Many Indigenous Peoples, including the Oceti Sakowin Oyate, have signed treaties with national governments. In all such cases, Indigenous Peoples, like national governments, are possessed of inherent sovereignty and may enter into such agreements in good faith. In the case of the Oceti Sakowin Oyate, these treaties were signed in 1851 and 1868 at Fort Laramie, and recognize a combined territory of approximately 60 million acres that include the better part of South Dakota, and parts of North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska for the “free and undisturbed use” of the “Great Sioux Nation.” Few, if any of these treaties, have ever been fully implemented, despite recognition of their legal standing by national courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States.

National governments continue to dishonor themselves and the treaties with devastating consequences for both Indigenous Peoples and the environment. Currently, the Oceti Sakowin Oyate occupy less than 2 million acres of land while federal authorities continue to approve and support uses and interactions that further degrade treaty lands. For example, in 2016, the United States Army Corps of Engineers approved the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) on treaty lands taken from the Standing Rock Tribe in 1958. This pipeline runs beneath Lake Oahe and the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, which are sacred rivers that millions of people (not just the Oceti Sakowin) depend upon.

Since the Mining Act of 1872 which allowed miners to purchase claims on sovereign treaty lands, mines (first for gold and now for uranium, lithium, and rare earth), were the first major infrastructure in violation of the treaties with the United States federal government. Abandoned gold mines continue to pollute the waters and sit atop sacred places, while new mines jeopardize water quality and availability in an area that is dry and subject to increasing drought conditions as we confront the twin ecological crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Meanwhile, federal, national, and provincial authorities work hand-in-hand with tribal authorities devised and imposed by colonial powers on Indigenous Nations (in the case of the Oceti Sakowin Oyate this occurred through acts of Congress in 1889 and 1934) which permit and grant approval of activities that further destroy the land, including oil and natural gas drilling. Traditional authorities, the treaty councils, and those who seek to restore and interpret traditional lifeways in this new era, disagree with these decisions and view them as a consequence of ongoing treaty violations.

Indigenous Peoples, including the Oceti Sakowin Oyate, since time immemorial have been distinct Peoples possessed of inherent sovereignty. These Nations and communities share common ancestry and their own societies, spiritualities, languages and dialects, lifeways, culture and traditions, knowledge, science and technology, economy, history, territory, laws and norms, governance, leaders, warriors, and the capacity to enter into relations with other nations. For the Oceti Sakowin Oyate, our traditional form of government is a decentralized confederation among seven bands that include both appointed and hereditary positions of authority who maintain our customary laws of Wakǵáŋ Tǵáŋka, wólakǵota, and the čhaŋnúŋpa. Our lifeways also contain institutions and knowledge forgotten by the dominant, colonial culture that makes Indigenous Peoples more effective stewards of the environment when empowered to steward our treaty lands and practice our traditional practices.

THEREFORE

Western scientists have called to keep half of Earth's lands, waters, and seas intact in order to preserve the ecological functionality of the biosphere and slow or halt the climate crises. Political leaders have proposed protecting 30% of Earth's surface by 2030 (30x30). Restoring treaty lands, waters, and seas to Indigenous Peoples and traditional cultures interrupts the extractive and destructive misuse of these areas by national authorities and the resulting severe ecological consequences. It also honors the agreements these governments entered into with the leaders of other sovereign nations.

RESOLVED

1. Require the full respect and enforcement of all treaties with Indigenous Peoples according to the laws of Indigenous Peoples and the international law of treaties between nations as equals.
2. Require that matters and disputes between Indigenous Peoples and national governments, and other nations and states, be resolved by treaties as between nations as equals.
3. Require the return of all territory and lands, including but not limited to sacred Pahá sites, unceded lands, and all territory and lands taken through allotment.
4. Require full reparations for all harms of any kind or nature, including but not limited to the ecology, suffered by Indigenous Peoples.
5. Restore and respect the primacy of the traditional and customary laws of Indigenous Nations and communities in the constitutions and courts of national authorities.
6. Recognize that achieving the Half/30x30 target must include the restoration of treaty lands to the customary governance and stewardship by Indigenous Peoples.

7. Restore the traditional customary governance of Indigenous Peoples.
8. Restore the traditional customary selection of governance officials by Indigenous Peoples.
9. Cease the colonial rule of treaty lands, including the so-called doctrines of discovery, trust authority, and plenary power.
10. Implementation by Indigenous Nations of inherent sovereign authority including but not limited to any and all use or development of its lands, water, minerals, and airspace and the conduct of persons, corporations, and any other entity occurring within its territory.
11. Require the full respect and enforcement of all treaties with Indigenous Peoples according to the laws of Indigenous Peoples and the international law of treaties between nations as equals.
12. Require that matters and disputes between Indigenous Peoples and national governments, and other nations and states, be resolved by treaties as between nations as equals.
13. Require the return of all territory and lands, including but not limited to sacred Pahá sites, unceded lands, and all territory and lands taken through allotment.
14. Require full reparations for all harms of any kind or nature, including but not limited to the ecology, suffered by Indigenous Peoples.

PROPOSERS

Name: Philimon Two Eagle
Title: Executive Director,
Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council
Country: Hé Sapa
Email: phil.twoeagle@rst-nsn.gov

Name: Claude Two Elk
Title: Chairman, Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council
Country: Hé Sapa
Email: tokala2elk@gmail.com

Name: Ilarion Mercurieff
Title: Founder, Global Center for Indigenous
Leadership & Lifeways
Country: USA
Email: imercurieff@gmail.com

Name: Shay Sloan Clarke
Title: Executive Director, Global Center for
Indigenous Leadership & Lifeways
Country: USA
Email: director@gcill.world

SECONDER

Name: Amy Lewis
Position: CEO, WILD.org
Country: USA
Email: amy@wild.org

“ We invite the world
to the Black Hills
to show them how important
this place is to us.”

Phil Two Eagle,
Executive Director
Sicangu Lakota Treaty Council





Acknowledgements

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The World Wilderness Congress is a global community organizing event to strengthen priorities and coordinated actions around the protection of wild Earth. Without a global community of wilderness and environmental champions, this event would not happen. Thank you to all our delegates, volunteers, sponsors, partners, and advisors. Each and every one of you is helping to transform the world.

We also want to give special thanks to the following individuals and organizations who have gone the extra mile to make WILD12 a reality.

MAJOR SPONSORS



EPC Mediu
www.epcmediu.ro



ESRI
www.esri.com



Born Custom Guitars
www.bornguitars.com



Prairie Edge
www.prairieedge.com



The Nature Conservancy
www.nature.org

SPONSORS

Bob & Charlotte Baron
Fulcrum Books
The Mark & Maureen Miller Family Foundation
Visit Rapid City

HOST:



ORGANIZER:



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Executive Director: Philimon Two Eagle, Executive Director, Sicangu Treaty Council

Executive Organizer: Amy Lewis, Chief Executive Officer, WILD.org

Deputy Organizer: Adam Hanson, Sr. Conservation Network Manager, WILD.org

Members:

- James Rattling Leaf, Global Indigenous Consultant & Principal of the Wolakota Lab
- Jason Taylor, Superintendent of Indiana Dunes National Park, U.S. National Park Service
- Anpo Jensen, Advocate, Writer, Author, Poet; Kiyuksa Tiospaye of the Oglala Lakota Oyate
- Yen Parico, Director of CoalitionWILD
- Erinn Drage, Executive Officer to the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, representing Madhu Rao, Chair of IUCN WCPA
- Justin Poirier, Oglala Sioux Tribe, Fifth Member
- Jennifer Martel, Visitor Center Coordinator, Sitting Bull College
- Krystal Two Bulls, Executive Director, Honor The Earth

CO-ORGANIZERS

- Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute
- Elouise Cobell Land and Culture Institute
- Global Center for Indigenous Leadership and Lifeways
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
- Wilderness Foundation Global
- Wilderness Specialist Group, IUCN WCPA

SYMPOSIUM ORGANIZERS: GLOBAL GATHERING OF KNOWLEDGE, WISDOM, AND WAYS OF KNOWING COMMITTEE

Honorary Chair:

Victor Douville, Professor of Lakota Studies and Cultural Coordinator at Sinte Gleska University, PhD

Chair of Native Science:

Greg Cajete, Former Director of Native American Studies and an Emeritus Professor in the Division of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies in the College of Education at the University of New Mexico, PhD

Organizing Chair:

- **Bob Dvorak**, Professor in the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Services Administration at Central Michigan University, PhD
- **Chris Armatas**, Research Social Scientist at Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, Rocky Mountain Research Station, U.S. Forest Service, PhD
- **Fernando Sanchez**, Director of the Elouise Cobell Land & Culture Institute, Assistant Professor at the University of Montana, PhD
- **Jason Taylor**, Landscape Ecologist and joined as Director of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, PhD
- **Steve Carver**, Geographer, Director of Wildland Research, Professor of Rewilding and Wilderness Science at University of Leeds, PhD
- **Vicki Sahanatien**, Knowledge and Research Manager, Lands and Resources, Mushkegowuk Council, PhD
- **Zdenka Křenová**, University Teacher at Charles University in Prague, PhD

PROCEEDINGS

- **Bob Dvorak**, Professor in the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Services Administration at Central Michigan University, PhD
- **Chad Dawson**, Professor Emeritus, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry
- **Chris Armatas**, Research Social Scientist at Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, Rocky Mountain Research Station, U.S. Forest Service, PhD
- **Tina Tin**, Environmental Consultant living in France, PhD

WORKING GROUPS

On Sovereignty and Wilderness: Deepening the Wilderness Concept Through Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom

Chairs: Gwen Bridge, Gwen Bridge Consulting, and Vance Martin, Wilderness Foundation Global (President Emeritus)

Through the Eyes of Buffalo: A Strategic Platform to Restore All Natural World Relationships

Chairs: Tatewin Means, Executive Director, Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation and Cristina Mormorunni, Co-Founder and Director, Indigenous Led

Advisory Council: Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and Wilderness Case Studies

ADVISORS AND SUPPORTERS

Arvol Looking Horse
Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance
Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of Interior
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Chris Eagle Bear
Claude Two Elk
Cristina Mittermeier
Curt Freese
Darlene Perkins
Edhkwehlynawd Botanical Refuge
Environment Now

Ernesto Enkerlin
Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Interior
Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Gwen Bridge Consulting
Henry Quick Bear Sr.
Indigenous Led
International Journal of Wilderness
Jaime Rojo
Julie Cajune
Justin Deegan
Mexican National Commission of Natural Protected Areas, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Michael McBride
Mushkegowuk Council
National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance
Parks Canada
Patricio Robles Gil
Richard Moves Camp
Rick Two Dogs
South Dakota Native Tourism Alliance
Terra-NatureWild Conservation
Texas Tribal Buffalo Project
The Global Rewilding Alliance
The Wilderness Society
Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation
Timothy Hass
University of Montana, College of Humanities & Sciences
Vance G. Martin
Victor Douville
Vivian Delgado
Wendell YellowBull
Wilderness Foundation Africa
Wilderness Foundation UK
Wilderness Leadership School
Wildland Research Institute
Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative

TEAM WILD.ORG

Adam Hanson, Amy Lewis, Jennifer Meyer, Madison Miller, Yen Parico, Tori Pfaeffle, Giulia Gasparrini, Jackie Batrus, Tiffani Robertson, Michelle Dog Eyes, WILD's Board of Directors and Trustees

PAST ORGANIZERS

Alan Watson
Andrew Muir
Bittu Sahgal
Byron Mallot
Clem Tillion
Denise A. Robertson
Findhorn Foundation
Ilarion Mercurieff
Jaime Rojo
Julie Cajune
Leona Graham
Maurice Strong
Michael McBride

Michael Sweatman
Nora Kaher
Partha Sarathy
Patricio Robles Gil
Percy Trezise
Peter Thacher
Robin Buzza
Sunil Meatha
Susan Ruddy
Terry Tanner
Tom Thomas
Vance Martin
Wally O'Grady

IN MEMORY

Maggie Bryant
John Hendee
Magqubu Ntombela
Ian Player
Frank Raimondo

STAY IN TOUCH

Follow WILD12 updates and happenings through our social media channels and our Voices of Wilderness podcast!



[/wildfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/wildfoundation)



[@wild_foundation](https://www.tiktok.com/@wild_foundation)



[@wildfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/wildfoundation)



[@wildfoundation](https://www.x.com/wildfoundation)



[/the-wild-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-wild-foundation)



[@TheWILDFoundation](https://www.youtube.com/@TheWILDFoundation)

Please use the hashtags **#WILD12 #12WorldWildernessCongress #WorldWildernessCongress** to be a part of the 12th World Wilderness Conversation on the above platforms and don't hesitate to tag us in your content!

For further content or social media collaboration requests, please email Giulia Gasparrini, giulia@wild.org.

Wild 12

PROUD EXECUTIVE HOST:



PROUD EXECUTIVE ORGANIZER:



PROUD FOUNDING MEMBER OF

WILDERNESS
FOUNDATION
GLOBAL

Contact us at:

717 Poplar Ave
Boulder, CO 80304
info@wild.org